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New Masses

Who Murdered The Vets?

A First Hand Report on the Florida Hurricane

By ERNEST HEMINGWAY

Consumers' Research on Strike—*By ARTHUR KALLET*

Vigilantes and Cops—*In SANTA ROSA and CHICAGO*

Closing Session of the C.I.—*by EUGENE GORDON*

Forsythe on Robert Briffault's "Europa"

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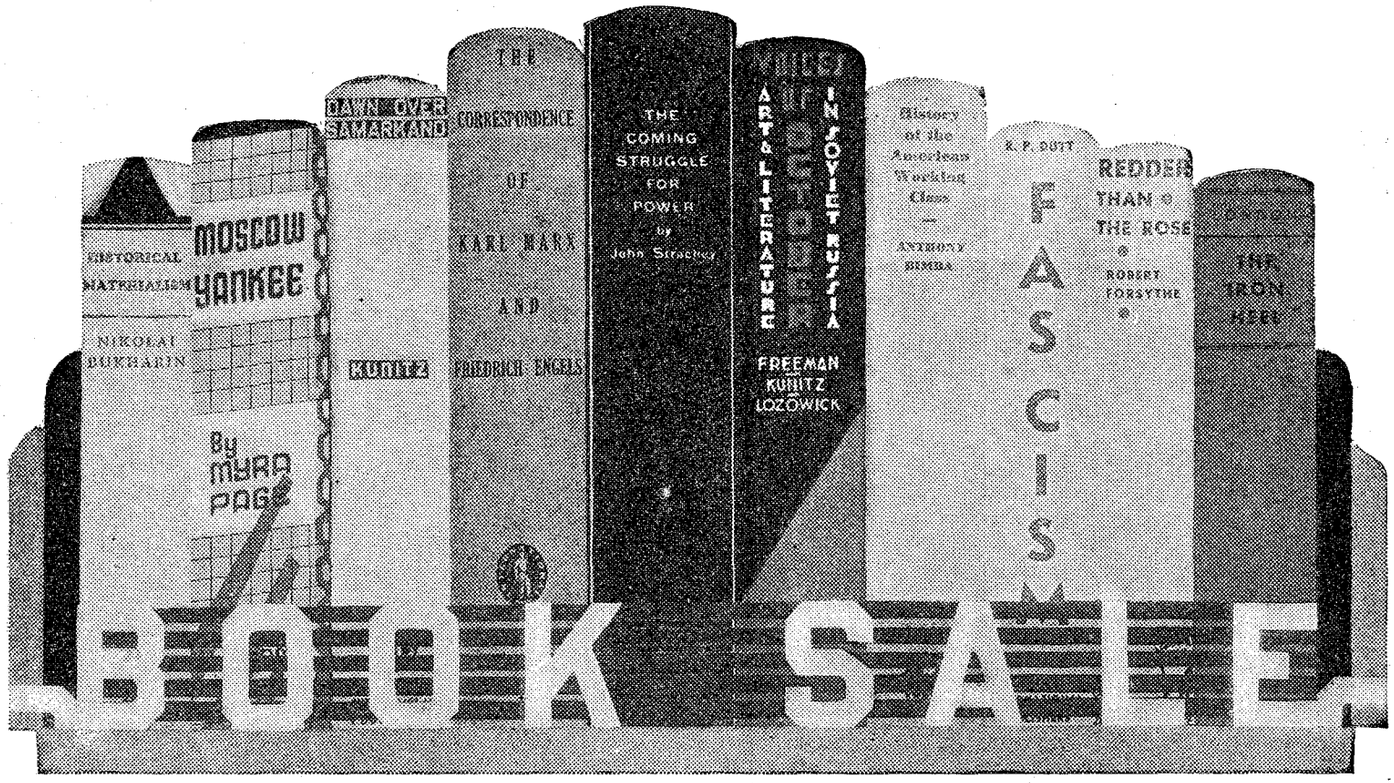

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New Masses

SEPTEMBER 17, 1935

Who Murdered the Vets?

LEAVING the veterans to die on Matecumbe Key was no more on "act of God" than leaving them there to live in match-box wooden shacks sweating under the tropical sun for starvation pay. Hurricanes do not arrive without warning. The Weather Bureau is able to announce their exact position, progress, intensity and direction forty-eight hours in advance. And it does. Storm warnings were broadcast, hurricane flags were flown all over the Keys and the southern shore of Florida on Sunday before the storm struck. Ernest Hemingway tells the story elsewhere in this issue. A relief train was equipped and ready to take off for Matecumbe Key to evacuate the veterans in sufficient time to carry them all to safety. What held it up? Florida's natives, philosophical in the face of disaster which hits some part of their state every year during hurricane time—from August to October—sum it up simply: "Hoover, he shot the vets, Roosevelt, he drowned them." The Roosevelt administration has attempted to hide its policy of unemployment, starvation and death for the veterans behind the President's ever-ready smile. It has tried subterfuge, high power publicity legends about model camps, slander, to prevent another bonus march. Its criminal negligence towards the shadows of boys who "fought to make the world safe for democracy" reached a tragic climax in Florida. The order to rush the veterans from the path of certain death was never given by the government responsible for them. Escape was impossible in the face of that murderous wind and tidal wave. It will take more than a toothsome smile and well-rounded evasions to explain away the killing of the men who lived in hell and died in torment on Matecumbe Key.

AN ACT OF GOD — *Russell T. Limbach*

Huey Is Dead

HUEY LONG had been threatened often and assaulted more than once. Now he has been killed. Fanatics, cranks, terrorists believe that the only way of stopping the harm done by a demagogue is to shoot him. Such an action is in direct opposition to the best interests of the working class. Individual violence, anarchistic use of terror by one man or by small groups is inexcusable. Though the shooting has resulted in his death—THE NEW MASSES has always opposed him in every issue—the dangers of fascism of which he was a leading exponent are in no way lessened. His ideas, the product of economic breakdown and decay in this country and throughout the world, will be taken up by other demagogues who desire the power and profit that go with political racketeering. His death only means that another will take his place: the Coughlins, Hearsts, Knoxes continue their fight to bring fascism to this country. If anything, such a shooting lends comfort to these forces—because the newspapers promptly make a martyr of Long and his like. They will also utilize this occurrence to let loose an assault of terrorism against the workin class in its attempts to organize. Ther is only one way of fighting such demagogues — by mass resistance, by th formation of a true Labor Party com posed of a united front of all worker whether skilled or unskilled, of all white collar groups, of all small farmers ar small business men. Long dead, as Lo alive, represents the menace of fascis against this menace must be ranged the forces of progressive action.

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Running Pickets Down

AS this issue goes to press, word comes from Washington, N. J., of the running down of a second picket as an attempt was made to drive six automobiles escorted by deputy sheriffs and constables through the picket line and to reopen offices and laboratories of Consumers' Research. Only one car got through the solid line of strikers which was reinforced by pickets from the American Federation of Hosiery Workers of Washington and Easton, Pa., the Dyers Federation of Oxford, the Motion Picture Operators of Easton and the Unemployed League of Warren County. Four strikebreakers guarded by deputy sheriffs accompanied F. J. Schlink, president of Consumers' Research, and his wife into the offices. The strikebreakers included the wife and a son of J. B. Matthews. J. Robert Rogers, who was deliberately run down by a constable Saturday while he was picketing is still in the hospital in Easton, Pa. The conditions leading up to the strike are described in this issue by Arthur Kallet, secretary of Consumers' Research, and co-author with F. J. Schlink of "100,000,000 Guinea Pigs." Kallet has been connected with the organization as director and officer since 1930. Because of his defense of the employes, he has been brought up on charges for dismissal as secretary.

Labor Party Progress

THE movement of American workers and farmers for a Labor Party of their own is rapidly gaining headway. Last week the state convention of the Connecticut Federation of Labor voted to conduct a referendum on the question, 'Shall a Labor Party be instituted in the State of Connecticut?" The vote is to begin November 1, and if a majority favors it, the Labor Party is to be organized by the State Federation no later than April 1, 1936. The referendum is to include all A.F. of L. local unions, whether affiliated with the State Federation or not. A bloc of nearly one hundred progressive delegates, which includes Socialists, Communists, non-party members and members of other political parties, definitely favors the organization of a Labor Party to put forward the program of labor and the farmers and will work for a favorable decision. In many other parts of the country the Labor Party sentiment is growing. In Paterson, New Jersey, there is a Labor Party ticket in the field and three Central Labor Bodies of the A.F. of L. have endorsed the movement. Sixty-three local unions in Chicago have gone on record for a Labor Party. The Oregon State Federation of Labor Convention also endorsed the movement as has the Toledo Central Labor Council. The united front under the banner of an anti-fascist Labor Party is the answer of the workers and farmers to the "breathing spell" for big business announced by President Roosevelt, which means only further attacks on the living standards of the masses to provide larger profits for the few.

Mackey

Pirate Flag

IN a decision in which he compared the swastika emblem to the black flag of piracy, Magistrate Louis Brodsky last week freed five of the six defendants held in connection with the demonstration aboard the German liner Bremen. Edward Drolette, the sixth prisoner, was held to answer charges of assault, but the magistrate refused a request for higher bail. The description of the Nazi flag is apt indeed and as was to be expected it brought forth a howl of rage from fascist officials who are demanding an apology from the state department. Congressman Marcantonio, acting with the International Labor Defense legal staff, has countered with a demand that Secretary Hull hear the defendants before acting on the German request. Undoubtedly the Bremen incident has done more than any other single event to dramatize the fight against fascism and to reveal its popular character. Magistrate Brodsky's denunciation of the Hitler regime reflects the fact that opposition to the Nazis is seeping upward to officials who are aware of the temper of the American people. The incident has also served to inform German anti-fascists that their fight has world-wide support since newspapers have been forced to give a great deal of space both to the demonstration and the long train of incidents, in diplomacy and in the court fight in defense of the "Bremen Six," that has followed.

THE manner in which Catholic churchmen have challenged Nazi orders reveals once again the fierceness of the internal opposition to Hitler. The Nazis are now putting on a military spectacle to arouse enthusiasm and it is significant that maneuvers are being held at the point closest to the Soviet Union border. Hitler's rearmament venture is at once the strongest and weakest point in his program. Its advantages spring from the fact that it is largely responsible for the increased profits of the Krupps and Thyssens, the real masters of the Third Reich and that it can be used to whip up a patriotic fervor. Its weakness is dislosed in the fact that it is literally bleeding Germany white; the drain on internal economy consequent on large arms expenditures has put finances of the Third Reich in a shaky position. This fact has been concealed from the people by the so-called secret loans but rising living costs cannot be concealed. European bankers believe that Schacht, economy minister, is now preparing for a huge forced loan. This loan will be unloaded on workers and middle-class folk by forcing government securities, which are far from secure, on the savings banks. This financial sleight-of-hand cannot be continued indefinitely and it is only a question of time until Hitler, like Mussolini, will be forced to seek a way out through the adventure of a war of conquest.

What's Tugwell Doing?

FOUR months after Congress passed the 4.8 billion dollar Emergency Relief Appropriation Act of 1935 and earmarked $500,000,000 for loans and relief to needy farmers and $450,000,-

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000 for housing, the Resettlement Administration of Rexford Guy Tugwell, established to carry out this mandate, has become such a scandal of bureaucratic red tape that even Republican columnists hesitate to expose it too severely. Rehabilitation loans to needy farmers approved by the Resettlement Administration were reported recently to be still at a microscopic figure while only 2,000 workers were drawing pay on housing projects of the No. 1 Roosevelt brain trusters. Meanwhile, the man who divided his youth between the mirror, the haberdasher and a writing pad on which he scrawled poetic dreams of "remaking America" has spent four millions in filling up the fanciest paper organization in the country with his friends. While millions in the rural slums which he is so fond of writing about clamor for the start of the vast rural housing program promised them, Tugwell can show only a handful of projects under way. Not one of these is new. All are hand-me-downs from the old Subsistence Homestead Division which Ickes started, or from the Rural Rehabilitation Division which Hopkins started. Ten thousand employes draw up reams of Administrative orders, notices, instructions, charts, diagrams and blue prints—but not a hammer has been lifted or a brick laid. This is planning under capitalism.

A New Scottsboro Trial

THE Scottsboro boys will go on trial some time next month, Special Prosecutor Thomas Knight has just announced. According to his plans, all of the boys will be tried at one time, since he claims all constitutional questions have been disposed of and there remains no advantage from the state's point of view in holding separate trials which were always in the nature of test cases. The holding of a joint trial will operate to prevent the International Labor Defense from pressing its demand for release on bail of two of the defendants and for juvenile hearings for the two boys. These pleas were to have been heard last summer, but were postponed to suit the convenience of Mr. Knight, who as Lieutenant-Governor has been presiding over sessions of the state senate. Alabama authorities now claim that jury lists are being changed to conform to the United States Supreme Court's decision under terms of a law passed for that purpose. If the Supreme Court's decision is to be followed, the names of Negroes must be placed on jury rolls, but that is no guarantee that they will sit on the case. The present practice in Southern states is to call Negroes and then dismiss them on the slightest pretext. The fact that constitutional questions have been disposed of makes the coming trials very critical. It is hard to believe that the commission of any error, no matter how prejudicial, will lead to a reversal in the state supreme court.

IT IS evident that Alabama authorities will leave nothing undone in their effort to send the nine defendants to the electric chair. Lieutenant-Governor Knight's decision to remain in the case gives the prosecution an official flavor and he is using the whole episode to further his own political fortunes. Although new indictments must be returned at Scottsboro, the belief of lawyers is that the trial must be held at Decatur. Of course it is impossible for Negroes to get a fair trial in that community always ridden by hatred of Negroes and further stirred by the two prior trials. Something of the temper of the community can be gauged by an incident reported last week in the Negro press. Two Decatur Negro women became involved in a quarrel over the custody of a child. While the quarrel was at its height, somebody called a deputy sheriff, who at once set himself up as judge and jury and awarded the child to one of the women. When the other protested the deputy set upon her and she attempted to defend herself. That was all the southern officer needed; he shot and killed her and then swaggered uptown to brag about what he had done to a "nigger wench." There has been no investigation. A change of venue is desperately needed from such a community. Only the holding of the trial in a larger city can afford the Scottsboro boys even a semblance of a fair trial.

The End of Doheny

ANOTHER rags-to-riches episode came to an end with the death of Edward L. Doheny. The story of his life is one of those tales beloved by editors who like to drive home the lesson that poverty is no bar to success. He went West as a poor boy and for years eked out a precarious living as a muleteer. He died a fabulously rich man who had given generously of his funds to various charities. But there is more to the story of his life than that. Doheny's wealth came from the exploitation of a natural resource, oil, to which he had no claim except the luck of striking it and the further good fortune of having done so at a time when the development of the automotive industry made oil an indispensable factor in industry. Once embarked on his career as

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WILLIAM BROWDER, *Business Manager*

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an oil magnate he stopped at nothing to pile up a fortune. The companies he headed cheated farmers and home-owners out of oil-bearing land; they tapped the Mexican fields and used their influence to make the American government blackjack Mexico into accepting his operations. Workers who toiled for the Doheny empire did so at wages that permitted super-profits. Doheny crowned his own career by bribing a cabinet member into giving him and his associates government oil reserves and then used his wealth to escape the prison term he so richly deserved. His philanthropies, like those of most millionaires, were the products either of a bad conscience, or more probably, a sop to a public wearying of millionaires.

Coughlin's Auto Union

FATHER COUGHLIN is out in the open as a labor organizer and is building up an automotive union to rival that of the American Federation of Labor. His union now claims a membership of 26,000 men, most of whom live in Detroit. The organization counsels the use of the strike only as a last resort and the utter disregard of such "technicalities" as formal recognition of the union and signed contracts. The priest has already advised his men "not to say to hell with the stockholder and capitalist, but to say 'charge more for your car and take less in profits'." Obviously such a union is exactly what the manufacturers want; in it there is no threat of collective bargaining and certainly they must be glad to get support for higher prices. Father Coughlin's union has an unsavory history. It is an outgrowth of the amalgamation of several company unions of the worst kind and its officers are men who served employers well as heads of these company outfits. Willian Green and officials of the A.F. of L. have nobody to blame but themselves for the mushroom growth of this almost openly fascist union. They began by flirting with the radio priest openly and at one time William Collins, then automotive organizer, presided at one of the meetings of the National Union for Social Justice. When auto workers were ready for struggle Green and his henchmen delivered them over to the tender mercies of Leo Wolman's Auto Labor Board. The latest trickery came when Green forced the naming of Francis Dillion as head of the A.F. of L. automotive union over the protest and against the will of the majority of union members.

Mr. Hearst Hunts a Party

WILLIAM R. HEARST has offered Al Smith the nomination for the Presidency. Being a practical politician, Smith is undoubtedly watching his step while keeping his eye peeled on the main chance. It must be noted, too, that there is a slight hitch in the whole matter: Mr. Hearst does not as yet actually have possession of the nomination he is offering Smith. What he is proposing is the organization of a new party, which with that irony for which he is noted he calls the "Jeffersonian Democratic Party." It is for this party that he wants Smith as standard-bearer, a party dedicated to the ideals of William Randolph Hearst. For the sake of these ideals, Mr. Hearst is willing to let bygones be bygones, to forgive and forget the nasty names he and Al once called each other and to take unto his bosom that viper which he once cast out. Such a party, he points out, would be able to save the country from "the imported, autocratic, Asiatic Socialist Party of Karl Marx and Franklin Delano Roosevelt," which Mr. Hearst and some of the best Wall Street people were hoodwinked into supporting in 1932. Already the general outlines of this proposed new party are beginning to take shape. It is being midwived by Bainbridge Colby, secretary of state under Woodrow Wilson, and other Liberty Leaguers. It has been endorsed by that well-known exponent of the principles of Thomas Jefferson and J. P. Morgan, John J. Raskob and has received the blessing of Father Coughlin. Among possible running mates for Al Smith, Mr. Hearst has thoughtfully suggested Governor Talmadge of Georgia, who has carried on the traditions of Jeffersonian Democracy by being the first to establish concentration camps for strikers. The ideals of Mr. Hearst are well known. Only those devoid of any olfactory sense will fail to smell a large fascist rat.

A Breathing Spellbinder

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT has told big business it can count on a "breathing spell" from now on. He added that he would propose no fundamental economic or social legislation to the next Congress. The reasons for this pronouncement are clear. James A. Farley, Roosevelt's 1936 campaign manager, had just returned from a continental tour on which he found that industrialists were chafing because even under the New Deal the process of intensifying the exploitation of the masses lagged. They want to feel certain, even more certain than heretofore, there will be no kind of "government interference" in the program of making the people pay for the crisis in lowered wages and living standards. Roosevelt, in the "breathing spell" letter he wrote to Roy Howard, head of the Scripps-Howard chain of newspapers, has given them this assurance, thereby ranging himself solidly and openly on their side by making the promise demanded.

He did more. Throughout the letter, he served notice upon the workers that he was *against* them. He boasted of what he had done for the monopoly capitalists—the makers of war and fascism, whose side, though he always represented it despite demagogic phrases, he now espouses so frankly. First he makes clear that he believes with business that

> the interests of what we broadly term business are not in conflict with, but wholly in harmony with, mass interests.

Then he apologizes to the vested interests for the misconception that arose in some places that his tax plan was meant to tax the wealthy. Perish the thought! This tax, he says

> is not intended to destroy wealth. . . . The broadening of our tax base in the last few years has been very real. What is known as consumer taxes, namely, the invisible taxes paid by people in every walk of life, fall relatively much more heavily upon the poor man than on the rich man. In 1929 consumers' taxes represented only 30 percent of the national revenue. Today they are 60 percent and, even with the passage of the recent tax bill, the proportion of these consumers' taxes will drop only 5 percent. . . . Taxes on 95 percent of our corporations are actually reduced by this new tax law.

That is how Roosevelt proves what his first tax proposal speech "to help equalize wealth" really meant!

Though he says his basic program of "curing the depression" has reached "substantial completion" making possible "the breathing spell" for big business, he is forced to admit that "unemployment is still with us, but it is steadily diminishing." He gives no figures. There has been a very modest upswing, it is true,

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in business and industry in the United States in the past two months. Has this created more employment in this capitalist country? We quote three current estimates on unemployment today:

Labor Research Association....17,000,000
Alexander Hamilton Institute..13,000,000
American Federation of Labor..11,000,000

The first two of these organizations find the unemployment situation virtually unchanged in the past few weeks; the A.F. of L. announces a rise over its last figure. There has been no increase in employment corresponding with the recent spurt in industry. What has happened is an increase in the process of speed-up and stretch-out throughout the country, bringing more production out of the same number of workers. Moreover, wages of even those who are working have not increased with the increased production they have been forced to yield. The A.F. of L. quotes official figures to show that whereas the workers lost three-fifths of their income between 1929 and 1932, they had regained only one-tenth of this loss by 1934—and this in the face of a rising cost of living, which continues rising today. When Roosevelt speaks of improved conditions, it is well to remember that while last year the total national income was $49,440,000,000, wages of 12,750,000 workers in four basic industries (manufacturing, mining, railroad and water transportation, building), represented only 18 percent of the total and that this percentage is constantly decreasing. It is for General Motors, with announcement of increased dividends; it is for the stock market, where eighty-eight corporation stocks made new highs for the year on the announcement of the "breathing spell"; and for members of the firm of J. P. Morgan and Co. organizing a separate corporation to return to the securities-selling field (from which the firm was for a short time barred by law) that "improved conditions" exist.

The "breathing spell" pledge by Roosevelt will not interrupt the trend toward more high-pressure exploitation of labor. It simply gives the employers —in exchange for their support of Roosevelt next year—carte-blanche to go full-steam ahead. Roosevelt has given them his blessing in the drive toward further suppression of civil rights, heightened vigilante terror, toward war and fascism. Any decisive interruption of their program can come only from militant workers fighting for their rights.

Debate in Geneva

THERE have been no surprises as yet in the League of Nations meeting. Despite "encouraging" communiques, diplomats have all but admitted their inability to prevent Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia. Nor was the speech by Maxim Litvinov, representing the Soviet Union, unexpected, even though it stands out as the one definite statement in the welter of evasion. Once again, Litvinov stressed the peace policy of the Soviet Union. Once again, of all the nations' spokesmen, Litvinov alone pledged his country to a realistic program of peace to be carried through in the face of the conflicting ambitions of the imperialist powers. His frank review of the Italo-Ethiopian situation cleared the air after the jumble of indefinite phrases which has always been the language of diplomacy. Nor can the sincerity of the U.S.S.R.'s devotion to peace be questioned even in Geneva: only a determined desire to avoid war can explain the Soviet Union's refusal to allow continual Japanese provocation to result in armed conflict. Litvinov added:

> . . . I propose to the Council not to stop at any efforts and means in order to avert armed conflict between two members of the League and to carry out the task constituting the sense for the existence of the League.

There is little prospect that Mussolini can be dissuaded from carrying out his plans by the conferences now going on at Geneva. The rainy season in Africa draws to an end. Simultaneously, Italian troops move toward the frontier. Mussolini announces elaborate plans for the mobilization of all available personnel for a one-day demonstration—involving 7,000,000 people. For the fascist government has refused point blank to pledge that hostilities will not be launched during the time the Council is deliberating. As the session proceeds, it becomes obvious that France will not agree to the use of sanctions; so long as France refuses to act, England will not, even if it would, dare to shoulder the burden alone. The new five-power committee composed of Turkey, Spain, Poland, France and England will deliberate: the result promises to embody some excuse for Italy's aggression and a "peaceful" proposal—such as granting Italy a mandate over Ethiopia (tantamount to handing one League member over to a larger nation for exploitation and conquest). By hiding behind phrases, the powers hope to wash their hands of the whole affair and allow Mussolini to go ahead—though retaining the right to be in at the finish when the spoils are divided. To assure this, England (the United States also followed suit) announced that it was returning Emperor Haile Selassie's oil grants without thanks. Just what interests American and British firms actually retain while publicly refusing the gift, are not revealed.

Each day Ethiopia attempts to hit on some compromise that will also preserve its status as an independent nation. Haile Selassie declares his willingness to accept foreign advisers, to cede some territory to Italy in return for payment or other rights and to grant Italy concessions to build a road and railway. But Italy has not mobilized a huge army to gain compromise concessions. Mussolini wants the whole of Ethiopia—and will not be turned aside by anything less.

The one hope for peace rests in organized labor. European unions have proposed a blockade on all shipments to Italy, whether of arms, food supplies, munitions or raw materials, in the event of Italy's invasion of Ethiopia. The French Communist Party has taken the lead, asking the cooperation of organized labor throughout the world and in particular an agreement with the British Labor Party in conjunction with the Communist Party of England. Such a blockade if pursued relentlessly would hamper Mussolini's plans: bankrupt Italy cannot conduct war without the aid of imported basic commodities. Desertions, sickness, even mutiny in certain sections of the Italian army, indicate the smoldering discontent within that country. It is his awareness of popular anti-war feeling that has forced the Pope to issue a reluctant statement in which he vaguely pleads for peace—and thus risks Mussolini's displeasure. Workers can accomplish what diplomats (granting for the moment they would make sincere efforts) cannot possibly do no matter how many conferences they hold —prevent Mussolini from going ahead with plans which threaten to involve the whole world in war. If war is averted, the brake will have been applied not by Geneva but by the working class of th world.

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WHAT PRICE AMERICA?

William Gropper

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Who Murdered the Vets?

A First-Hand Report on the Florida Hurricane

ERNEST HEMINGWAY

KEY WEST, FLA.

I have led my ragamuffins where they are peppered; there's not three of my hundred and fifty left alive, and they are for the town's end, to beg during life. Shakespeare.

Yes, and now we drown those three.

WHOM did they annoy and to whom was their possible presence a political danger?

Who sent them down to the Florida Keys and left them there in hurricane months?

Who is responsible for their deaths?

The writer of this article lives a long way from Washington and would not know the answers to those questions. But he does know that wealthy people, yachtsmen, fishermen such as President Hoover and President Roosevelt, do not come to the Florida Keys in hurricane months. Hurricane months are August, September and October, and in those months you see no yachts along the Keys. You do not see them because yacht owners know there would be great danger, unescapable danger, to their property if a storm should come. For the same reason, you cannot interest any very wealthy people in fishing off the coast of Cuba in the summer when the biggest fish are there. There is a known danger to property. But veterans, especially the bonus-marching variety of veterans, are not property. They are only human beings; unsuccessful human beings, and all they have to lose is their lives. They are doing coolie labor for a top wage of $45 a month and they have been put down on the Florida Keys where they can't make trouble. It is hurricane months, sure, but if anything comes up, you can always evacuate them, can't you?

This is the way a storm comes. On Saturday evening at Key West, having finished working, you go out to the porch to have a drink and read the evening paper. The first thing you see in the paper is a storm warning. You know that work is off until it is past and you are angry and upset because you were going well.

The location of the tropical disturbance is given as east of Long Island in the Bahamas and the direction it is traveling is approximately toward Key West. You get out the September storm chart which gives the tracks and dates of forty storms of hurricane intensity during that month since 1900. And by taking the rate of movement of the storm as given in the Weather Bureau Advisory you calculate that it cannot reach us before Monday noon at the earliest. Sunday you spend making the boat as safe as you can. When they refuse to haul her out on the ways because there are too many boats ahead, you buy $52 worth of new heavy hawser and shift her to what seems the safest part of the submarine base and tie her up there. Monday you nail up the shutters on the house and get everything movable inside. There are northeast storm warnings flying, and at five o'clock the wind is blowing heavily and steadily from the northeast and they have hoisted the big red flags with a black square in the middle one over the other that mean a hurricane. The wind is rising hourly and the barometer is falling. All the people of the town are nailing up their houses.

You go down to the boat and wrap the lines with canvas where they will chafe when the surge starts, and believe that she has a good chance to ride it out if it comes from any direction but the northwest where the opening of the sub-basin is; provided no other boat smashes into you and sinks you. There is a booze boat seized by the Coast Guard tied next to you and you notice her stern lines are only tied to ringbolts in the stern, and you start bellyaching about that.

"For Christ sake, you know those lousy ringbolts will pull right out of her stern and then she'll come down on us."

"If she does, you can cut her loose or sink her."

"Sure, and maybe we can't get to her, too. What's the use of letting a piece of junk like that sink a good boat?"

From the last advisory you figure we will not get it until midnight, and at ten o'clock you leave the Weather Bureau and go home to see if you can get two hours' sleep before it starts, leaving the car in front of the house because you do not trust the rickety garage, putting the barometer and a flashlight by the bed for when the electric lights go. At midnight the wind is howling, the glass is 29.55 and dropping while you watch it, and rain is coming in sheets. You dress, find the car drowned out, make your way to the boat with a flashlight with branches falling and wires going down. The flashlight shorts in the rain and the wind is now coming in heavy gusts from the northwest. The captured boat has pulled her ringbolts out, and by quick handling by Jose Rodriguez, a Spanish sailor, was swung clear before she hit us. She is now pounding against the dock.

The wind is bad and you have to crouch over to make headway against it. You figure if we get the hurricane from there you will lose the boat and you never will have enough money to get another. You feel like hell. But a little after two o'clock it backs into the west and by the law of circular storms you know the storm has passed over the Keys above us. Now the boat is well-sheltered by the sea wall and the breakwater and at five o'clock, the glass having been steady for an hour, you get back to the house. As you make your way in without a light you find a tree is down across the walk and a strange empty look in the front yard shows the big old sappodillo tree is down too. You turn in.

THAT'S what happens when one misses you. And that is about the minimum of time you have to prepare for a hurricane; two full days. Sometimes you have longer.

But what happened on the Keys?

On Tuesday, as the storm made its way up the Gulf of Mexico, it was so wild not a boat could leave Key West and there was no communication with the Keys beyond the ferry, nor with the mainland. No one knew what the storm had done, where it had passed. No train came in and there was no news by plane. Nobody knew the horror that was on the Keys. It was not until late the next day that a boat got through to Matecumbe Key from Key West.

Now, as this is written five days after the storm, nobody knows how many are dead. The Red Cross, which has steadily played down the number, announcing first forty-six then 150, finally saying the dead would not pass 300, today lists the dead and missing as 446, but the total of veterans dead and missing alone numbers 442 and there have been seventy bodies of civilians recovered. The total of dead may well pass a thousand as many bodies were swept out to sea and never will be found.

It is not necessary to go into the deaths of the civilians and their families since they were on the Keys of their own free will; they made their living there, had property and knew the hazards involved. But the veterans had been sent there; they had no opportunity to leave, nor any protection against hurricanes; and they never had a chance for their lives.

During the war, troops and sometimes individual soldiers who incurred the displeasure of their superior officers, were sometimes sent into positions of extreme danger and kept there repeatedly until they were no longer problems. I do not believe anyone, knowingly, would send U. S. war veterans into any such positions in time of peace. But the Florida Keys, in hurricane months, in the matter of casualties recorded during the building of the Florida East Coast Railway to Key West, when nearly a thousand men were killed by hurricanes, can be classed as such a position. And ignorance has never been accepted as an excuse for murder or for manslaughter.

Who sent nearly a thousand war veterans, many of them husky, hard-working and simply out of luck, but many of them close

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to the border of pathological cases, to live in frame shacks on the Florida Keys in hurricane months?

Why were the men not evacuated on Sunday, or, at latest, Monday morning, when it was known there was a possibility of a hurricane striking the Keys *and evacuation was their only possible protection?*

Who advised against sending the train from Miami to evacuate the veterans until four-thirty o'clock on Monday so that it was blown off the tracks before it ever reached the lower camps?

These are questions that someone will have to answer, and answer satisfactorily, unless the clearing of Anacostia Flats is going to seem an act of kindness compared to the clearing of Upper and Lower Matecumbe.

WHEN we reached Lower Matecumbe there were bodies floating in the ferry slip. The brush was all brown as though autumn had come to these islands where there is no autumn but only a more dangerous summer, but that was because the leaves had all been blown away. There was two feet of sand over the highest part of the island where the sea had carried it and all the heavy bridge-building machines were on their sides. The island looked like the abandoned bed of a river where the sea had swept it. The railroad embankment was gone and the men who had cowered behind it and finally, when the water came, clung to the rails, were all gone with it. You could find them face down and face up in the mangroves. The biggest bunch of the dead were in the tangled, always green but now brown, mangroves behind the tank cars and the water towers. They hung on there, in shelter, until the wind and the rising water carried them away. They didn't all let go at once but only when they could hold on no longer. Then further on you found them high in the trees where the water had swept them. You found them everywhere and in the sun all of them were beginning to be too big for their blue jeans and jackets that they could never fill when they were on the bum and hungry.

I'd known a lot of them at Josie Grunt's place and around the town when they would come in for pay day, and some of them were punch drunk and some of them were smart; some had been on the bum since the Argonne almost and some had lost their jobs the year before last Christmas; some had wives and some couldn't remember; some were good guys and others put their pay checks in the Postal Savings and then came over to cadge in on the drinks when better men were drunk; some liked to fight and others liked to walk around the town; and they were all what you get after a war. But who sent them there to die?

They're better off, I can hear whoever sent them say, explaining to himself. What good were they? You can't account for accidents or acts of God. They were well-fed, well-housed, well-treated and, let us suppose, now they are well dead.

But I would like to make whoever sent them there carry just one out through the mangroves, or turn one over that lay in the sun along the fill, or tie five together so they won't float out, or smell that smell you thought you'd never smell again, with luck. But now you know there isn't any luck when rich bastards make a war. The lack of luck goes on until all who take part in it are gone.

So now you hold your nose, and you, you that put in the literary columns that you were staying in Miami to see a hurricane because you needed it in your next novel and now you were afraid you would not see one, you can go on reading the paper, and you'll get all you need for your next novel; but I would like to lead you by the seat of your well-worn-by-writing-to-the-literary-columns pants up to that bunch of mangroves where there is a woman, bloated big as a balloon and upside down and there's another face down in the brush next to her and explain to you they are two damned nice girls who ran a sandwich place and filling station and that where they are is their hard luck. And you could make a note of it for your next novel and how is your next novel coming, brother writer, comrade s——t?

But just then one of eight survivors from that camp of 187 not counting twelve who went to Miami to play ball (how's that for casualties, you guys who remember percentages?) comes along and he says, "That's my old lady. Fat, ain't she?" But that guy is nuts, now, so we can dispense with him and we have to go back and get in a boat before we can check up on Camp Five.

CAMP FIVE was where eight survived out of 187, but we only find sixty-seven of those plus two more along the fill makes sixty-nine. But all the rest are in the mangroves. It doesn't take a bird dog to locate them. On the other hand, there are no buzzards. Absolutely no buzzards. How's that? Would you believe it? The wind killed all the buzzards and all the big winged birds like pelicans too. You can find them in the grass that's washed along the fill. Hey, there's another one. He's got low shoes, put him down, man, looks about sixty, low shoes, copper-riveted overalls, blue percale shirt without collar, storm jacket, by Jesus that's the thing to wear, nothing in his pockets. Turn him over. Face tumefied beyond recognition. Hell he don't look like a veteran. He's too old. He's got grey hair. You'll have grey hair yourself this time next week. And across his back there was a great big blister as wide as his back and all ready to burst where his storm jacket had slipped down. Turn him over again. Sure he's a veteran. I know him. What's he got low shoes on for then? Maybe he made some money shooting craps and bought them. You don't know that guy. You can't tell him now. I know him, he hasn't got any thumb. That's how I know him. The land crabs ate his thumb. You think you know everybody. Well you waited a long time to get sick, brother. Sixty-seven of them and you got sick at the sixty-eighth.

And so you walk the fill, where there is any fill and now it's calm and clear and blue and almost the way it is when the millionaires come down in the winter except for the sandflies, the mosquitoes and the smell of the dead that always smell the same in all countries that you go to—and now they smell like that in your own country. Or is it just that dead soldiers smell the same no matter what their nationality or who sends them to die?

Who sent them down there?

I hope he reads this—and how does he feel?

He will die too, himself, perhaps even without a hurricane warning, but maybe it will be an easy death, that's the best you get, so that you do not have to hang onto something until you can't hang on, until your fingers won't hold on, and it is dark. And the wind makes a noise like a locomotive passing, with a shriek on top of that, because the wind has a scream exactly as it has in books, and then the fill goes and the high wall of water rolls you over and over and then, whatever it is, you get it and we find you, now of no importance, stinking in the mangroves.

You're dead now, brother, but who left you there in the hurricane months on the Keys where a thousand men died before you in the hurricane months when they were building the road that's now washed out?

Who left you there? And what's the punishment for manslaughter now?

SOUTHERN HOLIDAY

Seven black men
Hanging high,
Drum their heels
Against the sky.

Seven swinging,
Jerking men
Rehearse like mad
Their dance again.

Seven gallows
In a row—
Seven shapes
Sway to and fro.
Listen, white man,
As you rant,
Silently
They give their chant:

Justice, justice,
Black and white;
Fling a coin
For wrong or right.

Their's the voice that
You shall know:
White man, let
My people go.

Seven swaying
Pendulums
Beat the song
Of herald drums.

The stirred cock calls
The flaming dawn.
Red, how red—
This new-born dawn.

FRANK MLAKAR.

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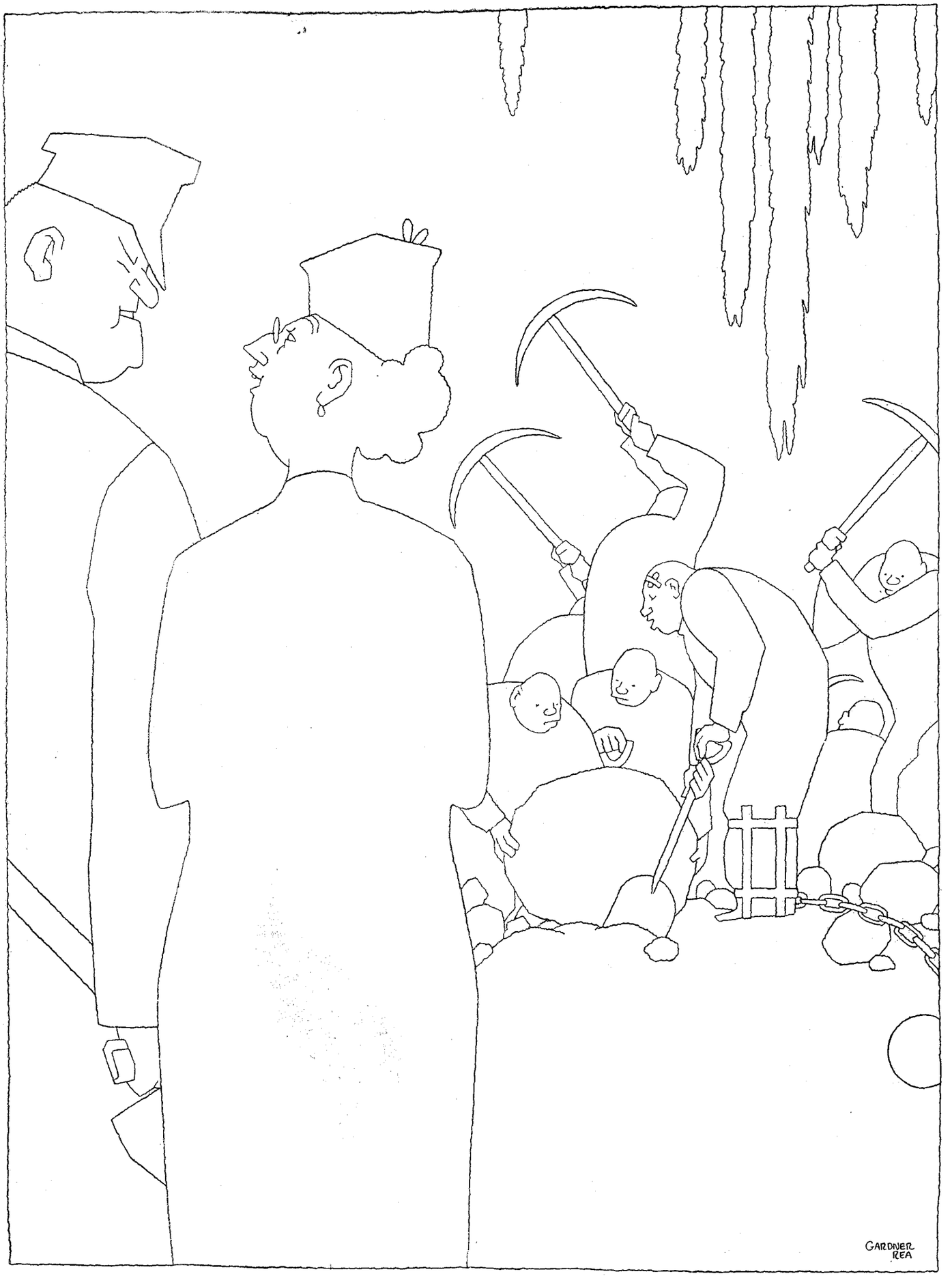

"WHEN DO THEY STOP AND SING?" *Gardner Rea*

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Consumers' Research on Strike

ARTHUR KALLET

IF the strike of over fifty employes which on September 4 closed the doors of Consumers' Research in Washington, N. J., had taken place in any other liberal organization, F. J. Schlink, president of CR, would be making a contribution to the strikers' funds; his wife, Mary Phillips, a director and the actual ruler of the organization, would be writing clever notes about the perfidy of liberals, and J. B. Matthews, vice-president and labor-relations adviser, would be sallying forth to address mass meetings on behalf of the strikers.

But the strike is not in another organization; it is right at home. And the triumvirate, no longer "friends of labor" but now employers with their own interests to protect, are using every device of openly capitalistic employers, from Red-baiting to violence, to intimidate the strikers and break the strike. Those who have been impressed by the scientific competence and integrity of Schlink or by the brilliant 700-percent Communist orations of Matthews in behalf of the exploited masses, will perhaps doubt this. But it is literally true. On Sunday, a county constable in the pay of Consumers' Research, deliberately speeded up his automobile and drove it into a picket line, knocking down and injuring J. Robert Rogers, a striking physicist on the CR staff. Yesterday newspapers received a public statement signed by Schlink which would do no discredit to Mr. Hearst, with its familiar phrases about "Communists," "Communist-affiliates," and its description of the A.F. of L. union at CR as an "out-and-out 'revolutionary' organization aiming at the unconditional capture of CR."

Because I am an officer of Consumers' Research, and was for many years a director, Schlink has charged me with disloyalty to the organization for siding with the strikers. "Loyalty" to a consumer organization, it would seem, means approving typical capitalistic exploitation of workers, vicious slander of union leaders, and strike-breaking which perhaps will reach its climax only with the hiring of thugs and the calling out of the militia. I have been charged, also, with being an instigator of the strike. If being openly in sympathy with CR's employes in their decision to strike is "instigating," then this charge is true. I "instigated," however, not because of "bias" as is now charged, but actually because I had seen the Schlink family's labor policy in action for several years, and knew that if the union did not now use its only weapon, its members would be fired one by one until there remained no threat to the triumvirate's totalitarian control.

The firing of the president and two other active members of the A.F. of L. union did not cause the strike. Nor was the cause too-low pay for some and forced, unpaid overtime for others (despite a $25,000 cash surplus). The underlying cause may be seen in the union's demand for an agreement containing terms which would "protect CR's workers against firings based on whim, personal dislike, minor differences in opinion, or no reason at all." One girl was fired after a post card from a person distrusted by Schlink was found in her desk when it was searched during her vacation. A chemist was recently given notice of dismissal for reasons which included his taking three pieces of toast at breakfast one morning and eating only one, and on another day, taking both milk and coffee at the same meal. A great many technical and editorial workers have been discharged because they could not adjust themselves to the vagaries and conflicts of family control, with decisions made in the office in the day time reversed at home at night.

After a series of forced resignations of employes about two years ago, the active discontent of the entire staff almost disrupted the entire organization. It was imperative to find out what was causing all the trouble and do something about it. Schlink finally agreed to have the employes talk individually and anonymously to some person whom they could trust so that he might diagnose the trouble and discover what needed to be done. A person was selected, but the report soon came back that no one wanted to talk to him. The reason was soon discovered. A sheet had been passed around requesting those employes who had grievances which they wished to express to sign their names so that interviews could be arranged. "Nobody would stick his head in that noose," said one of the employes.

The firing was easy. New employes at CR were required to sign a contract providing that they could be discharged at any time within six months of their employment, with or without cause. When it became desirable to fire a "permanent" employe, the microscopes were wheeled out and millions of tiny causes were found floating around where the naked eye had detected none before. The present employment contract, forced on the employes some months ago, with the aid of Matthews, is an out-and-out "yellow dog" contract, illegal in New Jersey, forbidding employes to engage in any outside activity without written permission of the board of directors.

The situation was overripe for a union and when Susan Jenkins, veteran of the Macaulay strike in New York, was employed by CR organization of the employes was finally assured. The union, the Technical, Editorial and Office Assistants Union, number 20055, received its federal charter from the A.F. of L. on August 1. On August 23, the board of directors was asked to recognize the union and set a date to discuss a union agreement. A few hours later, three employes, John Heasty, president of the union, John Kilpatrick and Donald Rogers, active union members, were fired. Incompetence was alleged only in Kilpatrick's case. For the other discharges no reasons were given. Heasty had been made head chemist and given a raise soon after he was employed. But then he was guilty of the grave error of permitting himself to be elected president of the union. Rogers, too, had made a mistake. In a union meeting a while before, he had advocated salary increases. Kilpatrick was in charge of promotion. Soon after he came, Miss Phillips said his work was brilliant. Both new subscriptions and renewals to the CR service showed a marked increase while he was there. But he was doomed; he was the second on the staff to join the union and he was seen frequently with union leaders.

In alarm the union officers asked repeatedly for a conference with the board of directors. The reply was a complaint from Matthews about their "dizzying tempo." They went for advice to a regularly accredited A.F. of L. organizer who wrote to me telling of the board's failure to arrange a conference with the union and of the dismissals and asking me to use my influence as secretary of CR to secure action by the board. Immediately a terrible cry of anguish arose from Matthews and the Schlinks. The union's going to an organizer and his writing to me, said Matthews, was blackmail.

Previous to this time, one member of the board of directors, Dewey Palmer, had not been consulted by the board about union problems. Now he was summoned to a board meeting and told to sign a statement that the union was guilty of blackmail and that the union members responsible would be fired. He refused. "I move we accept Mr. Palmer's resignation," said Miss Phillips. "You can't. I haven't resigned," said Palmer. "You're fired from the board," said Schlink, Phillips and Matthews. The response from the employes to this new attack was an immediate petition signed by sixty of the seventy staff members, many not in the union, asking for Palmer's reinstatement. The signing of such a petition was almost tantamount to voting against Hitler in a German concentration camp—and equally effective.

The next day, Schlink called a meeting of the entire staff. There Matthews, burning with righteousness, charged the union with racketeering and gangsterism, intimated that

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signatures to the petition had been obtained only through coercion and asked the staff to approve the board's action in throwing out the villain who was so warped that he actually approved a plain case of blackmail. A secret ballot of the staff followed. Only ten voted approval of the board's action.

That night a union meeting was called and I was invited by Heasty to attend. A day or two before, I had talked with Matthews in the presence of Oscar Cox, CR's attorney. "The union is split," he said. "They can't possibly get a strike vote. Sue Jenkins couldn't get two votes. If the union were allowed to vote on her, they would throw her out." I repeated Matthew's statements to the meeting. They were greeted with a roar of laughter.

Without a single dissenting vote and with cheers and applause, such as had probably never before greeted any action taken at CR, the union voted to authorize a strike if negotiations with the board of directors could not be successfully concluded. Six new members came into the union that night, knowing in advance that it probably meant their joining in a strike.

The board had said it would never reconsider Heasty's case. It refused to negotiate at all unless the union repudiated the "blackmail" letter. It also demanded a promise that the union would never send mass delegations to meet a board member—Matthews had been grievously offended a few days before by a visit from fifteen angry union members. To clear away any possible excuse for delay, on August 31 the union promised in writing never again to send large delegations; it withdrew the letter, while reasserting the correctness of the statements made therein.

But at the same time, the union wrote in its letter to the board, "We must demand that the discharged employes be reinstated, and that you include as a subject for negotiations the continued tenure of these employes and of all union members. . . ." The board accepted this letter as a basis for negotiations and the board and the union's shop committee met. For two days discussions went on. But the three who had been discharged were not reinstated, and the attempt was made to force on the shop committee a fake arbitration plan which, in the cases of Heasty and Rogers, would permit arbitrators to reach only one decision: that the employment contracts permitted their discharge.

The shop committee had no choice but to withdraw from the negotiations and on Tuesday night, September 3, after a final effort to have the three reinstated, the forty-one members of the union unanimously reaffirmed the strike vote. The following morning the strike was on, with fifteen of the remaining twenty-nine non-union employes joining the walk-out.

The Not-So-Timid Profession

ELIZABETH BLAKE

THE nineteenth convention of the American Federation of Teachers, which met at Cleveland the week of August 26, became front-page news, and its actions and decisions were followed with interest by teachers and workers throughout the country. From all sections of the country delegates came to take action on school and teaching conditions, on the question of academic freedom and on the larger social questions of which these are a part. Many had to overcome great difficulties to reach the convention, for their locals were too poor to pay their way and their own salaries had been reduced to a bare minimum.

There were the usual routine speeches of welcome by a city official, the usual speech about the enemies within the labor movement by an A. F. of L. official. Then teachers victimized by the authorities for various reasons addressed the convention. At once it was clear that this was no routine convention with picked delegates who would do what they were told. Here were young men who had lost their jobs for picketing in the lumber strike like Mr. Jewett of California, for working with the unemployed like Dr. Hallett of Pennsylvania, for attempting to organize a teachers' union, for teaching facts about Mellon which were not to a Superintendent's liking. Among the regional reports there were some, notably the Philadelphia report, which indicated that the teachers were being drawn into active defense of their salaries and tenure: participating in delegations, holding mass meeting, uniting with sympathetic groups of farmers and workers to attain their ends. There were, obviously militant trade unionists in the so-called "timid profession."

On the day the convention opened a delegation of fifty or sixty members of the New York local appeared in the visitors' section. They wore tags identifying them as the "United Committee to Save the Union, Local 5." This was the first indication that this convention was to act on the demand made by the administration of the New York local that their charter be revoked in order to exclude what they called "Communists and disrupters." From reports of meeting of the executive council, from literature distributed and by the interest of the delegates in the plea of the members from New York that their local be permitted to settle its own affairs, it became clear that around this question the fight of progressive elements in the convention for unity and democracy would be centered.

Local 5, New York City, is one of the oldest in the American Federation of Teachers. During the war, under the leadership of Dr. Linville and Dr. Lefkowitz it was known as a militant and even radical organization. As time went on its leaders became more acceptable to the educational authorities but they never succeeded in organizing a large section of the New York teachers. During recent years when salaries have been cut and every achievement of education attacked by reactionary interests, a feeling of dissatisfaction with the tactics of its union leaders has grown up among the members. The opposition groups, a large rank and file and a smaller progressive group, have rallied increasing support for programs of more activity by the membership and more vigorous organization of teachers.

As the oppositions have grown the group in power has curtailed democratic procedure and limited the powers of the membership. In spite of this the combined oppositions received 42 percent of the votes in the election this year. Foreseeing the loss of their narrow majority the administration-controlled executive board voted to call in an investigating committee from the national executive council. They also voted to refuse all applicants for membership until the question should be settled, later explaining this by saying that new members would be likely to be supporters of the minority groups. The investigation was called without consulting the membership and in spite of the expressed opposition of many school union groups and of a protest meeting of 750 union teachers. It was this investigating committee which had laid the problem before the national executive council.

It was rumored at the convention and stated later on the floor that the administration of New York delivered an ultimatum to the executive council. The charter must be revoked. They presented a new charter ready to be signed allowing them to form a new local excluding minorities. Miss Selma Borchardt who was friendly to the New York administration hinted that President Green would step in if the executive council rejected the ultimatum. The executive council met again and again. Every one wondered.

Meanwhile the fifty or more teachers from

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New York were very active in distributing literature and urging delegates to vote that the local be permitted to settle its own problems. These young and enthusiastic teachers, so interested in the preservation and growth of the union movement that they had come from New York at their own expense made a tremendous impression on the convention.

After three days of uncertainty, the Executive Council anxious to keep the New York issue from the floor of the convention, reached a compromise agreement. A committee of three was to be sent to New York for ninety days to observe the situation and to help in finding a basis upon which the local could work. At this point Selma Borchardt and, it was rumored, Dr. Lefkowitz, called upon William Green for help. Miss Borchardt had been in communication with Mr. Green. On the afternoon of August 28, a bombshell was thrown into the convention in the form of a telegram from Mr. Green. This telegram characterized Local 5 as "controlled and dominated by Communists." It insisted that the "charter of New York Teachers' Local be revoked and locally reorganized upon an American Federation of Labor basis and in conformity with the rules and policies of the American Federation of Labor." It insinuated a threat of reprisals if this action were not taken in these words. "Furthermore, Teachers' National Union must meet this issue if it is to be secure and hold the support of the American Federation of Labor and public opinion and if its purpose to organize teachers is to be achieved, it must disavow Communism and purge from its ranks all Communistic influence." True, Dr. Lefkowitz and Miss Borchardt had been right in supposing that his telegram would hit the convention with a terrific impact, but they had completely miscalculated its effect on the delegates. It was intended to frighten them with the possibility of losing their charter, with the fear of being classed as Communists in their communities, of losing the support of their local labor bodies. All these fears were played upon to the utmost when the matter was being discussed on the convention floor. But the reaction of the delegates was one of indignation that Green should have intruded himself in this way into the affairs of the Federation. One delegate referred to Green as "Hitler," another spoke of the "Mussolini telegram." The tide definitely turned against Dr. Lefkowitz and shattered his previous reputation for radicalism among many delegates. He stood out as the representative of William Green, of autocracy, of splitting the union. Hesitant delegates now joined the progressive wing. In the ensuing election Miss Borchardt and Dr. Lefkowitz were defeated for the first time in many years.

Three representatives of the united opposition in the New York local were given the floor for fifteen minutes each. Unable to enter into a lengthy discussion of the situation, they clearly established these basic points: Teachers of all shades of opinion, including Communists, have a right to belong to unions. Attempts at exclusion split the workers and play into the hands of the enemies of labor. "Communism" has become a convenient label with which to attack all liberal teaching, with which to exclude militants from the trade unions. It is being used in this effort to maintain control of the union. The New York local has grown and would have grown more rapidly if it had not been for the administration's fear of new members. The revocation of the charter would harm the union movement in New York and have reverberations throughout the country. The opposition groups were eager to meet with the administration and discuss their differences. In a democratic union in which the membership was allowed to hear all points of view and decide policy, groups holding different views, could exist side by side. Their main plea was for democracy, organization, increased union activity and unity.

The administration of Local 5 countered with supposed proof of the Communist affiliations of the opposition. It went into detailed definitions of the Communist Party, the Communist Party Opposition and the Comintern. It gave inaccurate and garbled accounts of the Communist position on the trade unions, disregarding the publicity-stated decisions of the Communist Party of this country and of the Communist International on the importance of building the trade unions and of working in them for the immediate demands of the workers. The leaders of the opposition, they said, were undoubtedly Communists and their 800 or so supporters followed them so enthusiastically, as to be as good as Communists. They gave a detailed account of supposed acts of disruption and sabotage, failing to indicate why these so-called disrupters were so enthusiastically followed by an ever-increasing number of union members.

The discussion that followed on the convention floor was basic and clear-cut. In answer to charges of being hostile to labor, delegates answered that they did not consider Green the whole of the labor movement and that they were friendly to the millions of workers in the A. F. of L. When some delegates threatened that their locals might leave the Federation if Green's dictum were not obeyed, those who opposed revocation indicated that they, on the contrary, would do all in their power to maintain the unity of the Federation no matter what decision was reached. Delegates from all parts of the country showed that they understood the reasons for the Red scare in this country and the A. F. of L. Green's dictatorial attitude was severely criticized. Delegate after delegate pointed to the necessity of uniting all teachers and other workers to fight the real enemy—exploitation and fascism.

The convention voted 100 to 79 to reject Green's demand that they revoke the charter. They replied to him, "We have faith in the ability of the local membership to solve its internal problems and in the ability of the A. F. of L. executive council to see that aim accomplished in full harmony with the principles of the American Federation of Labor." It was a declaration of independence by the National body, a refusal to abandon democratic principles under threats by a reactionary leadership. Under the influence of Dr. Lefkowitz and Miss Borchardt delegates from locals walked out of the convention. Just as the New York leaders were willing to break the local in order to keep control they did not hesitate to split the National organization when they were voted down. After the departure of this group great indignation was expressed by members of the convention, including many who had voted for charter revocation but objected to the defiance of the majority decision by Dr. Lefkowitz and his group. Several delegates took the floor to point out the contrast between the "rule or ruin" attitude of the New York administration group and the United Committee of union members who were working to keep the local united.

In spite of the departure of the eleven locals the convention did not neglect the national teacher problems which they had met to consider. Plans were made to carry out vigorous resolutions against Hearst and for academic freedom. The convention ended on a plea for unity within the Federation and a resolution to build the labor movement among teachers.

Teachers are expected to uphold the status quo and are subjected to daily intimidation in regard to their teaching, opinions and general activity. They are, to a greater degree than other workers, exposed to attacks as radicals and Communists. Only a small percentage of the teachers is unionized and this makes them rely to a very great extent on help from local labor bodies. These fears of being classed with Communists and of being cut off from local labor bodies were exploited to the utmost. The roll-call vote was an open vote. That a large majority of the delegates had the courage to vote against autocracy and splitting their international is a mark of their determination to uphold democracy and unity in the labor movement and of the extent to which a united fight against the common enemies of labor has taken root in this country. The stand taken by the American Federation of Teachers is, on its own level, comparable to the way in which the maritime workers on the West Coast disregarded the Red scare and united all their forces behind Harry Bridges, to the fight of the A. A. lodges for unity and organizational activity, to the unity attained in the furriers' union despite threats from Green, to the disregard by hundreds of local unions and central labor bodies of Green's command to expel Communists. The significance of this convention of the American Federation of Teachers can be judged only in the light of the great movement of the rank and file in the A. F. of L. toward militancy and unity.

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A BREATHING SPELL

Russell T. Limbach

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Vigilantes and Cops

The Cops Were Not There

Two days after the drunken mob of vigilantes ran amuck in Santa Rosa, Calif., The Press-Democrat of that city carried the article which we reprint below. The story, which was unsigned and gave no clue to the identity of the man quoted, bore the headline: "Vigilante Relates Eye-Witness Tale of 'Terror Raids' Upon Communists." And this editorial note: "Following is a complete and dramatic eye-witness account of Wednesday night's sensational anti-Communist 'raids' related in detail to a Press-Democrat reporter by a member of the vigilantes who participated in the 'reign of terror' from the start to its wild finish."—THE EDITORS.

AWAKING after a ghastly night of terror that came near reaching the point of bloodshed and lynchings, I am firmly convinced today that Sonoma County will purge itself entirely of all Communists—and at any cost.

Never in my life have I seen such a grim, serious minded band of citizens as determined upon their objective as the vigilantes were in seeking to oust radical agitators.

It was just at dusk that we assembled after an emergency call from our leaders. Nearly 300 men responded, coming from Cloverdale, Healdsburg, Sebastopol, Santa Rosa, Cotati, Petaluma and other parts of the county.

We formed in two groups, one at the Northwestern Pacific Depot park and the other on Third Street just off A Street. It was an awe-inspiring sight—this mixed assemblage of men from all classes of life, crudely disguised, wearing old clothes, carrying weapons ranging from rifles to home-made billy clubs and ready to battle against men who ridicule the American flag.

Few of us knew what was ahead, but we didn't care. Sure, we realized there was a risk, but what of it? Somebody has to teach these Communists they are not wanted.

We had been called out to "raid" a scheduled Communist meeting at 123 Fourth Street, but the meeting was never held. Apparently Communist lookouts sighted us and the radicals moved elsewhere to meet.

After waiting almost an hour in the lower end of town, our leaders summoned us to a downtown hall for a conference. Each man was carefully scrutinized as he entered to avoid spies gaining admission.

Somebody started playing a piano and it helped break the tension while we waited. The gang was restless and wanted action. On every hand little groups gathered together and cursed the activity of radical agitators—discussing the impending trouble that is feared in the hop, prune and grape harvests unless Communists are driven out.

A man from Healdsburg asked if the gang couldn't crash into the vacant meeting hall anyway, just to see what they could find. But leaders advised against it. "Let's go drag 'em from their homes," others shouted, and immediately plans were started for rounding up several known Communist leaders.

A man entered the hall with a "tip," conferred hurriedly with several of the leaders and a group of six men were quickly picked and sent out. Everything else became tense—realizing that at least some action was near. Soon the six men returned dragging a cringing and pitiful looking specimen of a man to the center of the hall. Quaking with fear, his frightened eyes roamed around the threatening crowd as he mumbled his "innocence." The man identified himself as Jack Green, but claimed he was not a Communist.

Leaders announced that he had been caught in a Mendocino Avenue office building, where he has an art studio. In his office was found a copy of the dodger announcing the Communist meeting that had been scheduled. Other incriminating evidence piled up. Several men identified him as having been present at the recent Germania Hall fracas. Accused repeatedly, Green finally admitted that he had signed a petition here to place the Communist Party on the ballot.

Jeers and shouts interrupted his feeble attempts to tell of his whereabouts earlier in the evening and questions were fired at him from all parts of the room.

"What'll we do with him?" someone shouted.

And came a multitude of answers—

"Give him the works!" "Run him out!" "Get the tar!" "Let's teach him a lesson."

Others favored giving him twenty-four hours to scram, but they were finally overridden. It was decided Green should be used to help round up other suspected radicals. At first Green demurred, claiming he didn't know any of the other "wanted" men.

A small group took the frightened victim into a dark side room and "talked turkey" to him. Green was told in no uncertain words that he had a choice of two things—work with the vigilantes to catch the other Communists or "take the works" himself.

He was brought back into the hall pleading that he would do anything he could to find the other men being sought. Small groups were quickly organized with twenty-five to thirty men in each.

Moving swiftly and quietly, the "night riders" dashed to their assigned places throughout the county. I went with the group taking Green. We went first to a house on Tupper Street, surrounded it and sent Green up on the steps to knock and call out the man we wanted.

He was so badly frightened he mumbled stupidly and some of the men behind kicked him for encouragement. A frightened woman in the house shouted repeatedly that the man we sought was not at home, that she didn't know where he was and screamed she would phone the police. We didn't worry as part of our gang had already checked the outside for telephone wires.

Our ruse had apparently failed, so we gave up and left. The failure incensed our crowd and they vented their wrath on Green. He was half-hauled, half-shoved back to our waiting cars a short distance away and threatened with dire warning of what would follow if he didn't do "a better job" in putting the finger on the next man we wanted.

From the Tupper Street home we went out to a ranch not far from the "Village" on the Guerneville Highway. We must have looked like a band of highwaymen, masked and carrying rifles, as we parked our cars and assembled for another attempt at getting one of the radical suspects. Green was slapped a few times to emphasize the warning that he play ball.

But again we were frustrated, a woman refusing to open the door for Green and claiming that the man we wanted was not home. She refused to budge from her story or reveal the man's whereabouts. The second failure made the crowd madder than ever.

One man seized Green out on the road and started to choke him, but others dragged him off. Another jabbed a rifle barrel into Green's stomach and for a while it looked like the party was coming to a climax quickly. But several of the men along insisted that Green be left alone as long as they could still use him so we returned to Santa Rosa. By the time we got back the vigilante headquarters had been shifted to a warehouse near the railroad tracks.

One other man had already been caught. He was George Ford of Cotati, who protested his innocence but was kept guarded in a corner of the room while the "round up" continued. Green was turned over to another squad, heading for the Sol Nitzberg ranch at Little Two Rock, near Petaluma and I went along. Five cars sped over the highway and country roads to the ranch.

When we arrived the group parked a short distance down the road and talked the situation over. Because of Green's futile attempts to aid at the previous places, a new ruse was decided upon. One car drove into the backyard and turned so the lights were shining on the back door of the house. Rifle-

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armed vigilantes spotted themselves behind trees surrounding the home. One of our men walked up to the back door with Green and knocked and aroused the occupants.

Nitzberg came to the door in his underwear, lighting a back-porch light. Jack Green identified himself and Nitzberg asked, "What's the matter?" Our man answered that he was a cab driver and had brought Green out with the understanding Nitzberg would pay for the call. As he was talking the lone vigilante carelessly opened the back screen door, but just as he was about to grab Nitzberg and haul him out to the waiting crowd outside—Green "double-crossed" his captors. With a shout, he lunged wildly into the house, dragging Nitzberg with him.

A cry arose from our crowd as we realized what had happened. Just as we all charged toward the back stairs, Nitzberg reappeared on the back porch with a shotgun and fired one barrel of the gun high as a warning. Naturally we all ducked for a place behind the trees. Inside the house, Nitzberg's family was hysterical.

"Shoot to kill, Papa, shoot to kill," screamed Nitzberg's wife.

"I shoot 'em. I shoot 'em!" he answered wildly, carrying out his words with volley after volley of gunfire.

"Come on out, Sol, or we'll drop you," a leader declared. "We have plenty of us and can riddle your house with bullets." But still Nitzberg's only answer was more shots and he called to his wife to bring more shells. Several of the vigilantes wanted to return the fire, but others called out against it. "Don't take a chance on the woman and kids," someone yelled in the darkness, as children could be heard crying and screaming.

Nitzberg took his stand near a window with the gun-barrel protruding outward, but kept his family around him constantly. He was in plain sight of the vigilante gunmen but they wouldn't shoot because of fear they would hit the wife or children. It became a strange siege, almost like war days. . . .

Two of the gas shells ripped through windows into the house but failed to explode. A third struck on the window sill and burst outside, sending a great wave of the painful searing tear gas back upon all of us. It was awful! After gagging and choking a while our gang, looking all the wilder with tear-stained faces, finally shot a successful shell into the house.

A cry arose as the gas went through every room in the structure. The woman shouted "We'll come out, we'll come out." A cheer went up from the boys outside and Nitzberg was ordered to walk out of the door with hands up in the air. At first he stalled sending his wife out in advance. In the glare of the spotlight she stood on the porch and pleaded for her husband's life, asking what the crowd wanted him for.

"We just want to talk to him, lady, and want him fast. Any more delay and in goes another gas bomb!" one of our boys replied.

"No, no, don't," she screamed. "He's coming! He must dress!"

In a few moments out walked Nitzberg—sullen, bitter, refusing to say a word. With him was Green, terror stricken and gasping at the thought of going back into the hands of the wild mob. Our boys surged down onto the pair, seizing them roughly and dragging them down the road to the cars. . . .

The wild ride back to Santa Rosa was one of almost hysterical jubilation on the part of the vigilantes. The tension once broken as the battle ended, we began to realize for the first time how close we had come to death —many deaths, perhaps. Although Nitzberg had done the shooting, most of the wrath during the ride back was vent upon Green —the man who had pleaded for leniency and then "double crossed" the group.

When we got back to the warehouse, the story of the shooting and Green's attempt to escape spread like wildfire. The pair was dragged into the hall—stupefied from fright and beatings. By that time another man, C. Meyer of Cotati, had also been brought in and a short time later Ed Wolff of Healdsburg was added to the four victims. It was a sight that few who saw it will ever forget. Dimmed lights added to the ghastly scene caused by the milling crowds of vigilantes in varied masks and other disguises.

It had been an all night task, but at last the climax was near and everyone was on edge. Our leader addressed us and the radicals we caught, declaring, "Sonoma County is not large enough for such men as you who are attempting to overthrow the government under which you live!"

Each man was questioned and given a chance to explain his actions, with charge after charge being shouted at Green and Nitzberg from the milling throng. An American flag was produced and the pair asked to drop to the floor on bended knees and kiss it. Both refused sullenly, but not for long. After a count of three, fists swung through the air. Both men dropped to the floor, semi-conscious. They were shaken back to sensibility enough to obey the order and kiss the stars and stripes. The other trio willingly and after seeing the treatment given the others almost gladly, kissed the flag without resistance. Wolff pleaded that he was not a Communist, speaking hurriedly and impassionately as the crowd jeered at him. Several Healdsburg vigilantes voiced charges against him that he had difficulty explaining.

One man pushed his way through the crowd to face Wolff, grasping him around the throat in powerful hands. A hush came over the crowd as the vigilante cursed and berated Wolff with Communist activity and finally ending with a dramatic shout:

"Ed, my hands are on your throat—and the only thing that keeps me from crushing the life out of your cursed body is that I believe in an Almighty God!"

After pleading that he would gladly get out of the county at once and stay out the crowd agreed to release Wolff. Meyer and Ford were given the same warning and also escaped the tar and feathers. But the impatient mob waited no longer with Green and Nitzberg. Clippers were produced and hair hacked from their heads. Shirts were ripped from the backs. Buckets of tar paint were hurled over them. Pillows were broken and feathers hailed down upon the sticky black substance. From two men they had been transformed into fantastic, ghostlike creatures of some other world.

Communism in Sonoma County was getting its due—and the vigilantes, restrained through most of the night, came near going wild. Kicked, beaten, dragged and shoved the two staggering tar victims—their eyes glazed from torture and terror—were taken out into the street. Then came a procession that Santa Rosa has never seen the like before. Down Fourth Street they walked, clear past the courthouse and on out of the city limits—while behind them followed the wildly shouting and triumphant vigilantes.

It was a long night, a wild night. But the vigilantes are just as determined that there will be other such nights as long as Communists continue attempts at radical agitation in Sonoma County. The ultimatum has been issued. The vigilantes have proven they are ready and willing to back it up with violence. It's up to the Communists to get out now, or suffer the consequences.

The Cops Were On the Job

GEORGE MARTIN

CHICAGO.

ON AUGUST 31 a group of Chicagoans attempted to exercise their constitutionally-guaranteed rights of assembly and free speech, to show their opposition to the conquest of Ethiopia in particular and to war in general. A number of organizations participated. The meeting was held—very appropriately, considering the nature of the protest—at 47 Street and Prairie Avenue, a Negro neighborhood.

The meeting was called for 2 p. m. Shortly before three I got off the Forty-seventh Street car two blocks west of Prairie and started walking east on 47. I noticed a number of policemen on the street and near the middle of the block I noticed them loading several men into a patrol wagon, which was already badly overloaded. I decided that I had better catch a westbound car at the next corner and get out of that part of town. Of course I knew that an officer cannot arrest you for walking up the street, but why take a chance?

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At the next corner a couple of newspapermen had trained their cameras on the rear of a police wagon, waiting for a picture. I paused a moment to watch. One of the officers, seeing me, yelled, "Move on." I "moved," but in vain. The same officer yelled, "Another smart guy, huh?" and grabbed me, tearing my shirt. Another shouted, "Resisting are you? Resisting an officer!" whacked me a couple of times with his club and pushed me toward the next man, who whacked, shouted and pushed me toward the next; and so I went, back and forth, down the line and into the wagon. The officers had gotten their man, the newspapermen had gotten their picture.

Resisting arrest? With seventy-five or one hundred police on that one corner? I didn't even resist "resisting." I just covered my face with my hands and took the pounding. Luckily I am tall and so took the blows on my shoulders and back. The shorter men caught it on the head and neck.

At first I blamed my luck for being on the scene just when the newspapermen were all set for a picture, but I learned later that it made little difference. The police picked up nearly every white man in the neighborhood within five or six blocks of the scheduled meeting place. They took men and women out of drug stores, soda fountains and even from 5 & 10 cent stores and department stores. Many of those taken knew nothing about the demonstration, but were in the neighborhood on business, or because they worked or lived nearby.

Once in the wagon, one of the officers started informing me that he "enlisted in the army at seventeen and was fighting for my country when you were in short pants, you wise ——— you." He repeated the same, with variations, to each new arrival. On the way to the station, when a woman, who had been picked up while waiting on a corner for a bus, asked why they were being held, he answered, "I enlisted when I was seventeen and fought for my country." One of the other officers gave a truer answer when he said, "Because you're white, a white man has no business in this neighborhood." I have often known of them arresting a man because he was black but this was the first time I ever heard of them arresting a man because he was white. The police merely assumed that all white men in the district had some connection with the demonstration.

At the station we had to run a gauntlet. One officer stood just outside the door and punched each man in the spine with the end of his club as he passed through. If the man tried to dodge, an officer inside the door socked him. They seemed to be enjoying themselves.

Once inside the station I found at least four hundred there ahead of me, not counting the police; and a bloody bunch they were. The short men, especially, had been beaten on the head. Bloodiest of all was an elderly man who stood several inches under five feet tall.

We were lined up and questioned as to our names and addresses, height, weight, nationality, etc. I was placed in a small cell with forty-eight others. The cell was about ten feet square with a bench on each side. Seats were "rotated" every fifteen minutes, but most of the time were occupied by men who obviously could not stand. We were so crowded that there was no room to sit on the floor. We stood from about 3:30 P. M. until after 10:30 when they started to sort us out. During all of this time we had even been denied the use of the telephone.

At about five o'clock, an officer led a plainclothesman in front of our cell and recited: "Look at the Jewish bastards, look at the faces on those Jewish sons of bitches. They won't look at a colored man usually, but today they come down here and pat him on the back. The Jewish bastards!" Then he walked around the corner and repeated the same formula before the next cell. This was no accident; the majority of the men in the cell were not Jewish. This officer wanted us to feel that we were being led astray by the Jews, and the Negro to feel that the white man was really his enemy.

Before releasing me two of the officers gave me a heart-to-heart talk, which ran something like this. "You should never fight an officer—You can't fight a thousand police. Yes you did resist, or tried to—You can't fight a thousand police. Nobody struck you —you can't fight a thousand police.—You go back up to your part of town, where you can look out over the park and the lagoon (I had given an address in a more well-to-do section of town.) There's nothing for you to see down here. You go back up to your part of town and stop worrying about these people.—You can't fight a thousand police.—Who tore your shirt?—Oh no—You tore your own shirt, you and nobody else tore your shirt.—You can't fight a thousand police."

Once outside the station I asked an officer where I could catch an "L." He answered. "The 'L'? How in hell did you get down here, on a street car? You grab the nearest transportation and get to hell out of this neighborhood or I will run you right back in. We'll make good Americans out of you."

Two Years of Drought, One of Rust

MICHAEL BLANKFORT

ROBERTS COUNTY, S. D.

"IF YOU farmers can't make enough for seed next spring, you ought to quit farming." The speaker was a medium-sized man with serious eyes and a moustache; the County Agent. A laugh went up in the court room. The wooden seats were filled with farmers and business men. They had come together to discuss what was going to be done with the seed and feed loans. The laugh came from the farmers who were sitting uneasily. It was a sharp, unfunny laugh; bitter and angry. One of them got up. He had farmed in South Dakota for forty years. He walked to a window, spat out a quid of snuff turned his blue, angry eyes on the County Agent.

"We got to stop farming, eh? It's our fault, eh? We made the drought. We made the black rust that ate up this year's wheat. We sold ourselves seed wheat at a $1.65 a bushel when we could've bought it for 35 cents. We're the dumb ones that thought up the idea of plowing under, of slaughtering our stock. You bet, we're the ones. Is that what you're saying, eh?" There wasn't a peep from the County Agent the rest of the night. And almost every business man in the room spoke up and pledged his support to the farmers.

What's the situation?

Roberts County, South Dakota: good grain land, good prairie land that once upon a time had acres and acres of No. 1 wheat, barley, oats and rye growing on them. Roberts County: the prairie soil broken for the first time by the homesteading Norwegian, Swedish and Yankee farmers from Ohio, New England and Pennsylvania.

Two years of drought when there wasn't enough green stuff to keep crickets alive; when farmers had to go sixty miles into Minnesota to feed their stock. Drought and the A.A.A. took care that there wasn't too much stock to worry about. Drought and the A.A.A. saw to it that when the spring of 1935 rolled around there wasn't a peck of seed in the bins. And the benevolent government saw to it that farmers had just enough to keep from starving, only by working in the gravel pits at 40 below. (Breaking gravel, grading, scraping, hauling, loading and unloading all by hand when there were enough machines for that purpose in the county sheds. But hand work was the order lest the farmers work less than eight to nine hours a day.)

Spring of 1935. Where is the seed for the sowing? Again the fond parent, the Department of Agriculture. We will lend

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you seed for which you will pay $1.65 a bushel for Durum wheat and $1.35 for barley and so on and so on. It didn't matter to the Department of Agriculture that the same seed could be bought at the elevators for half—because they knew the farmer couldn't buy at the elevators without cash and they had millions of government bushels stored up that they wanted to get rid of. And with malice aforethought, or if you prefer, with the Triple A reduction program in mind, they held up these loans until late spring and late spring wheat is rarely heavy enough to be used for anything else but feed.

The farmer got his seed and feed loans, almost too late to help, almost too late to sow, almost too late to keep his cow and horse from rotting away. Most of the farmers had all they could do to sow, so weak were their horses. Many had to go in debt further and rent horses, or get gas on credit for run-down tractors. And nearly all of them, 85 percent in Roberts County, wondered as they ran down the furrows what they were doing this for. The crop they were sowing and the stock they were feeding were mortgaged by these loans. What yield there was belonged to the government. But prospects were bright for a very good crop; maybe enough to pay off these loans and have enough left to live on without relief and the gravel pits.

June went by; just enough rain; just enough sun. Then July and the black rust began to creep through the fields. August, the sun dried up the sloughs and the black rust grew like a prairie fire. When harvesting time came, farmers left many a section uncut because it would cost more for binding twine than the grain was worth. And what was cut and bound was almost too light to shock. And the government sent their bird-dogs around to check up. The farmer was told: we expect dollar for dollar on the seed and feed loans. Did it matter to Henry's henchman that a farmer would have to repay his loan three to six bushels for each one he borrowed? Seed wheat for which he paid $1.65 a bushel yielded him wheat that was worth approximately forty cents a bushel. With this particular wheat, it would take something over four bushels to pay back one bushel.

This didn't disturb the experts of the Triple A; that is, not until the Farmers National Committee of Action, the United Farmers League, the Holiday and the Farmers Union throughout the entire Northwest, in conferences, conventions and mass meetings resolved that no farmer would pay more than one bushel for one bushel. The slogan "Bushel for Bushel" swept the farm country. The countryside was on the move as it had been when foreclosures and evictions were the order of the day.

The Farmers National Committee for Action, as well as the United Farmers League and several counties of the Holiday, went even further than the bushel for bushel program. Anticipating the moves of Washington's sidewalk farmers they foresaw that the farmer must have the freedom to sell without interference from any creditor. They knew that as soon as threshing began, the government and the banks would send the long, oh so long, list of liens and mortgages to the local grain elevator, and that the elevator man would make out his check to pay the farmer with the names of the creditors first and the farmer, the producer, with his name at the end of the list. They knew that by the time the check got around to the farmer, there'd be nothing left. He'd still be owing. Freedom to sell his grain without any interference from creditors was the second demand of the farmer.

WHEN the threshing began and the farmer finally realized how poor his grain was, he thought twice even about the bushel-for-bushel payment. In one vicinity in Roberts County, an area of about ten miles square there isn't a bushel of wheat that can make No. 5 grade, the lowest Bureau of Standard grade. And bushel-for-bushel payment was changed by mass meeting after mass meeting to bushel-for-bushel payment only after enough has been set aside to support the family for the winter and to seed next spring. That this was the only program that would keep the farmers from the gravel pits next year is amply illustrated by the plight of one farmer.

Flax is usually Roberts County's best bet. William Nelson lives in Norway Township. He borrowed enough from the government to pay for five bushels of flaxseed at the government price of $2.25 a bushel. His seed loan for the ten acres he intended to put flax in was $11.25. He had to hire a horse to seed the flax. His own horse was too weak. That cost about a dollar. To cut and bind the ten acres (gas, oil, repairs, binding twine) cost him $6.50. His total cost amounts to $18.75. Flax is selling today (August 29) at $1.29 a bushel. The usual run of flax is from eight to ten bushels an acre, but two years of drought and one year of rust did something to the land. Mr. Nelson's ten acres yielded altogether six and a half bushels and at $1.29 a bushel his gross income is $8.39, making a total deficit of $10.36. The important thing in this story is not so much that his flax ran him a loss but that even *if his seed loan was cancelled,* he wouldn't make a cent on his crop. (I haven't included in the cost his own living expenses or even the cost of threshing which runs to about $6.) And what is true of Mr. Nelson's flax field is true of 85 percent of the farmers in Roberts County, no matter what crop you figure on.

Now, even the Department of Agriculture knows you can't put a farmer in jail for debts. They know the militant tradition of the farmers in foreclosure time. They don't want a little insurrection on their hands. They also know that the small business man in every town in the farming area depends for his living on the farmer and in most cases is willing to fight alongside him. So they made the first compromise, a compromise designed to divide the banks, to split part of the business men from the farmer. They offered to release up to 50 percent of the value of the crop to be used to pay harvesting and threshing expenses when and if receipts and orders for such services are presented to the elevator man. The other 50 percent will be retained to pay off part of the feed and seed loans. The garage man would be paid off, the thresher, the local grocer (only for credit extended during harvest and threshing time), the twine man, they would all be paid. But what about the farmer? The farmer would get exactly nothing.

The farmers did the unexpected thing. They didn't bring their grain to the elevator. They stored and binned it. They are doing that this very minute. The elevator man is sitting in the sun waiting for nothing. Where he once had 200 loads a day, he is getting six. This 50 percent release didn't pan out.

But grain in the granary doesn't buy flour or oil. Grain in bins doesn't buy groceries. Federal relief has been cut off and the farmer is on the bounty of the county. And what county will give relief if it knows the farmer has a single kernel of marketable grain in his bin? Therefore, the farmer is given this kind of run around. No relief, if you've binned your grain. And if you sell your grain you get no cash, so you're back on relief. Is there any wonder that you can ride down the gumbo roads of South Dakota and see acre after acre of uncut wheat?

With farmers not acting according to the best rules of Wallace and Tugwell, with grain in the bins instead of in the elevators, the boys thought up another scheme to get the seed and feed loans paid without creating a rebellion. Keep your grain, they said. Bin it. Okay with us. We'll even lend you 60 percent on it. In that way you can wait for higher prices and sell when you're ready. Of course, before we send you the 60 percent, we'll deduct your feed and seed loans, and your interest charges, and $5 a hundred for stock which will be issued. Yes, naturally, we also will retain a mortgage on the crop.

This is the latest maneuver of Messrs. Wallace and Tugwell. They don't seem to understand, or rather they don't care to understand, that even if the seed and feed loans were cancelled outright, 85 percent of the farmers wouldn't have more than what it takes to pay their harvesting and threshing expenses. How much, then, will they have if they get only 60 percent of the value of their crops after the seed and feed loans are deducted?

The farmers are going to be just as quick to see this as they were to see the 50 percent proposition. They are either going to sell for cash and use the money as they see fit, or they are going to keep their grain and demand relief.

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The Closing Session

EUGENE GORDON

Moscow.

FOUR MEN within the door opening upon Okhotny Ryad examined my Soviet passport and my pass, comparing the snapshot in the lower corner of the passport with my face. They nodded and I stepped into the broad, crowded foyer of the trade-unions' building. Today's was the closing session of the Seventh Congress of the Communist International.

I had heard so many details about the Congress that a great deal seemed familiar from the start. I had heard of this temporary "bookshop" along the left wall. On the front of the building outside there were appeals in sixteen languages to workers of the world to unite. Above the rows of shelves behind this counter stacked with books and pamphlets similar panels of red cloth and white lettering, but these words in diverse tongues dealt with Marxian literature.

Conversation and laughter in strange tongues made it seem that the sixteen languages had been multiplied by perhaps 16. Voices formed an undertone that neither rose nor fell and in which individual words were indistinguishable. Words were diffused and blurred into a restrained roar. It was the voice of the world proletariat.

Flowers and greenery embanked the passage leading to the white marble staircase, at the foot of which stood four men examining passes. They scrutinized mine as if the first to see it. One man tore off two corners of the card and handed it back; I wound with the stairs to the second landing. There was another temporary counter up here. Delegates pressed upon it buying the Communist papers of their countries. There were also piles of mimeographed news bulletins with the latest dispatches from all countries.

I was in the wide sweep of corridor of which Borodin had told the staff of The Moscow Daily News the day after this Congress opened. Exhibits here of material created in the struggle against imperialist war and fascism, according to Borodin, was the most extensive ever collected. He said it was worth a trip around the world to see.

This corridor was shaped like the blocked letter C, inverted, the hall of columns — the auditorium in which the Congress met — being contained within the curvature. On the lefthand side, therefore, the wall was broken at intervals by doors opening into the auditorium; the righthand wall, however, was an unbroken front of heavy placards. Indeed, both walls were like huge placards, the lefthand side only being interspersed with openings. All the photographs, drawings, maps, newspapers, newspaper clippings, letters, posters, leaflets, throw-aways — everything the militant working class has printed in its struggle against a resourceful and cruel enemy — had been assembled here, each exhibit bearing the name of the country and the organization sending it. The corridor seemed to stretch for miles, as crowded as a small town shopping center on Saturday night. If I do not see it all now, I wondered, shall I ever have this chance again? Through the doors on the left I saw a few persons in the auditorium.

It seems as if the Communist paper L'Humanité has sent from France the largest exhibit of all. Not amazing in view of the advanced development of the united front movement there. Enlarged photographs of French workers in every industrial center of that country illustrate whole pages both from L'Humanité and the bourgeois French press. A huge map, drawn to scale, is startling in its black and red areas representing a death-struggle opposition. The red circle around Paris is the People's Front against fascist reaction. Photographs from Germany, Spain, Japan and China are equally horrible. Two Spanish girls lie on their backs upon the cobblestones, their clothing splotched with blood. Militiamen tramp past, their eyes irresistibly drawn to the mutilated bodies. The fine young body of a Chinese worker lies headless in the middle of a deserted street. Chinese, German, Spanish and Japanese workers press upon me, discussing these pictures as something from a casual experience. In a few days they will be returning. No one can say whether this German boy will be alive a month from now. Dolorez, the woman delegate from Spain, realizes that her safe return to the workers who sent her depends wholly upon their own might. The voice of the world proletariat, subdued and restrained, yet roars through these corridors and halls like thunder below the horizon.

Here is the exhibit from the United States, with a picture each of Foster and Browder above it. Here is a May Day demonstration in Union Square; demonstrations in Harlem; workers being attacked by company police; a Negro hanging by his neck to a tree; a Negro agitating a crowd of black and white workers. It is getting late and the auditorium is nearly filled. Since my arrival in the Soviet Union I have met a few young people, born after the October Revolution, who speak with awe of New York and America. Admiration for America's technique has caused some of them to overlook her heinous social face. I wish every worker in Moscow could see this exhibit. I need have no fears for Moscow's young generation, however, I remind myself, recalling a recent experience at a Pioneer camp. "When are the workers in the United States going to have their revolution?" they persisted in asking. They know the answers to their own questions, a fact which heartens and cheers me.

THE curved corridor ended in a white marble staircase winding upward. Workers at the doors are scrutinizing passes; they examine mine and I enter the hall of glistening marble columns and dazzling crystal chandeliers. I find a seat near the door and opposite the end of the hall where enormous paintings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, above the Presidium, face the delegates against a background of folded red velvet. Here I can see the whole auditorium although I am some distance from the Presidium's platform. On the back of the seat in front of me there is a metal plate with the words "Russian," "German," "English," "French," "Spanish," "Chinese," "Japanese," "Scandinavian" and "orator" printed on it. Beside each word there are two metal holes for plugging in earphones. When the speaking begins you adjust the earphones and plug in at your own language. The interpreter, speaking simultaneously with the "orator," creates the illusion that you are listening to the "orator."

There are several Negroes among the American delegation. William L. Patterson takes his seat. I recognize members of the Marine Workers Industrial Union. Trachtenberg enters from the corridor on the opposite side, his arms piled with new books. He stuffs them into the aperture under his desk and sits down, wiping his shining forehead. The tailor-shop immaculateness of his person has not been disturbed, despite the exertion. I am touched with tenderness at sight of old friends, for recollections of other meetings in other places make me sentimental. I should like to call them by name; I should like to talk with them of folks and conditions back home. They will be returning soon but I shall remain in Moscow. They will be in the midst of daily struggles while I live where such struggles have ended forever. My time to return will come soon enough, however, and I shall be in the midst of struggles as of old. I thus console myself. "In Moscow we have no names," a worker who left the United States illegally told a friend here who greeted him aloud. "The name you called me — forget it. It's not the one I came under." Thus we are reminded that the enemy strains his ears to hear even in this Congress.

I AM subconsciously aware of growing tension, the drone of voices and of massing crowds. Hardly a seat in the reserved section remains unoccupied. Nearly eight o'clock. I take my Russian grammar from the briefcase. The glittering lights hurt my eyes. Patterson leans over my shoulder and we look up and down and across the filling auditorium and

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discuss the delegates and the proceedings. Dimitrov, Patterson says, will make the closing speech. A new executive committee will be elected. There will be a new control commission and alternates to the executive board. "Maybe something in it for the Negro press," he says. "I think a Negro will be among the candidates for election." Tonight's proceedings will be filled with drama. Others have said the same thing. There is a Negro youth in the gallery opposite. He is among a group of white friends, one of whom is a girl I have met at meetings in my home in Boston, whom I have seen in demonstrations on Boston Common, in Pittsburgh and in Salem.

Patterson returns to his place among the delegates and Willi Bredel, the exiled German novelist, passed behind me toward his seat. He is short and chubby and is mirthful and serious by turns. He seats himself in the same row, across the aisle. Beyond him in the enclosure two elderly women emerge together from the door marked PRESIDIUM. The enclosure, too, is filling up but the women come straight ahead, as if to places reserved for them. They are both tall and white-haired; one is somewhat stouter than the other. Their clothes are plain, those of the larger woman being a sort of over-all dress with shoulder straps or suspenders over a light-colored shirtwaist. The stouter woman's hair is parted severely in the middle and knotted at the back of her head. It is her glasses which unmistakably identify her as Lenin's widow. I immediately know the other, too, from photographs, as Lenin's sister Ulyanova. They take seats in the front row close to the balustrade, being close enough to the platform to see and hear everything.

Nobody among the delegates pays especial attention to the women. Perhaps that's because, having been present at all or almost all the sessions, they have come to be considered simply as two of the crowd. But I cannot think of them so impersonally. These two women are living links between a genius who is dead and the new world he led in creating. Nadezhda Konstantinovna Krupskaya, the woman who sits there, was married to Lenin. They read and discussed together; they slept in the same bed; they suffered together in exile. There above the Presidium is an enormous painting of Lenin beside those of Marx, Engels and Stalin. When I look at Krupskaya sitting here Lenin and Leninism assume a new significance. Lenin is not simply a name any longer. Lenin is no longer simply a painting in the auditorium or in a shop window of Kuznetsky Most or a bronze bust in the dining room of the Moscow Daily News or the name on any one of thousands of pamphlets and tomes in libraries. He is a reality. He is no longer a theory but he is life. The woman who sits beside Krupskaya knew Lenin as a youth, as a young man and as a man. She was a link between him and the revolutionary movement when he was in exile. She has called him brother as a sister calls one brother. Now these women sit together here among representatives of millions of workers of every land, Lenin's widow and Lenin's sister. They sit here following the sessions of a body which Lenin's genius helped to create. The October Revolution transformed social life on one-sixth of the earth's surface but Lenin was the soul of the Revolution. How do these two women feel, knowing that Lenin belongs no longer to them but to the future of mankind?

THE closing session of the Seventh Congress of the Communist International is about to open. I make myself comfortable and adjust the earphones. Members of the Presidium are seating themselves on the platform. There is Browder at the center of the table, the lower part of his face twisted into that characteristic half smile. Beside him sits the tall, esthetic Henri Barbusse. Marty of France sits next to Rolland. There is Wilhelm Pieck, whose hair is as white as his linen suit and as shaggy as a lion's mane. Dimitrov is not there, I reassure myself, having examined the Presidium again and again. Stalin, of course, is not there. He appeared on the opening night. No more room is left in the auditorium and only one or two seats are left for pass-holders. The delegates form an international audience of young men and women in their work clothes. They are men and women among whom sit the most advanced thinkers of the world. These men and women are not "intellectuals" seeking ways and means through formal logic of changing the world; they are dialectical materialists; they are realists. They are, in every country except this one and Soviet China, law-breakers or criminals, some with heavy prices on their heads.

There is a Negro among the Brazilian delegation. The Americans sit near the front, on the right. The Japanese occupy the front rows, with the English directly behind. The Philippine delegation and delegations from Central and South America fill in the center and extend away over to the other side. The red panels with their white lettering, encircling the auditorium at the height of the balcony, have become an international symbol. It is the same in Boston as in Moscow; the same in Shanghai as in London; the same in Manila as in Birmingham. I feel as if I know everybody in the great hall.

Thorez of France arises and declares the concluding session of the Seventh Congress of the Comintern open. Franz, for the Mandate Commission, reports that although the total membership of the Communist Parties at the time of the Sixth Congress was 1,676,000, the total membership at this time is 3,418,000. These figures include the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Franz pauses for quiet; he continues. In the capitalist countries at the time of the Sixth Congress there were 445,300 Communists but today there are 758,500. Again he waits for quiet. There are today 1,554,000 members of the Young Communist Leagues, including the All-Union Leninist Communist League. Communist Leagues, including the All-Union Leninist Communist League.

Applause had been continuous but when the speaker went into the next statement the whole house applauded, shouted and whistled. "The total number of members in the Communist Parties and the Young Communist Leagues, including the Party and the League in the Soviet Union, has risen from 3,835,000 at the time of the Sixth Congress to 6,800,000 at the Seventh," Franz shouted.

OTHER reports followed swiftly. Gottwald, on behalf of the commission appointed to study the third point on the agenda of the Congress (Dimitrov's report on fascism and the united front), declared that in not one of the amendments proposed by delegations to the resolutions on Dimitrov's report were there any deviations from the general line of the Comintern, evidence of the complete unanimity of the Congress. Marty spoke on Ercoli's report on "Preparations for Imperialist War and Tasks of the Comintern." Ackerman spoke for his commission on Manuilsky's report on the results of Socialist construction in the Soviet Union. When Marty declared that the triumph of the working class and collective farmers of the Soviet Union "is inseparably linked up with the name of the organizer of this great victory, with the name of the great leader of the toilers, Comrade Stalin," the house rose, shouting and applauding. It was a long time before quiet could be restored enough for the session to proceed.

Wang Ming, representing the Communist Party of China, speaks for the two commissions appointed by the Presidium on the affiliation of new sections of the Communist International. The Congress has decided to accept as sections of the Comintern the Communist Parties of Indo-China, the Philippines, Peru, Columbia, Porto Rico and Costa Rica and has instructed the Comintern to decide on the question of accepting as sections the Communist Parties of Panama, Ecuador and Haiti, following the submission of these parties of material and information on their real position. The Peoples' Revolutionary Party of the Tana-Tuva Peoples' Republic has been accepted, Wang Ming says, as a section of the Comintern with the rights of a sympathetic party.

In a few minutes it will be ten o'clock and Dimitrov has not yet appeared. Perhaps he will not come, after all. Perhaps reports of his being scheduled to sum up were rumors of no more foundation than those that Stalin would be here tonight. . . . Thorez has given the floor to Pieck, who moves the acceptance of a resolution instructing the Executive Committee to reconsider the statutes of the Communist International, making changes in them in accordance with the decisions of the Seventh World Congress. As all the other resolutions proposed tonight have been unanimously adopted, so is this one. Angaretis comes up next, reporting on a number of appeals for reinstatement in the Communist International. He moves, on behalf of the Presidium, that they be submitted to the New International Control Commission, yet

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is still to be elected. The motion is carried.

"We have now come to the last point on the agenda," Thorez says. I sit up straight and open my eyes, squinting beneath the dazzling chandeliers at the press box on the other side of the auditorium. A man there is yawning broadly and continuously, probably exhausted by weeks of these sessions. But he makes no move to leave. Shepard, of the English Daily Worker, sits behind him. Vern Smith and Sender Garlin, of the American Daily Worker, are taking notes. The last point on the agenda. Elections to the leading organs of the Comintern.

Ercoli is speaking in the face of blinding white lights concentrated upon the platform at opposite sides of the auditorium. He moves the election of an executive committee of the Comintern of 46 members and 33 alternates. He reads the names. When Dimitrov's is reached the applause mounts to a thunderous storm. "Long live the tried colleague of Stalin, the helmsman of the Comintern, Comrade Dimitrov!" The storm subsides only to rise again in greater intensity at the calling of Stalin's name for the executive committee. The stamina and enthusiasm of these spokesmen of the international working class stimulate me, too, to shout. They are shouting: "Long live Stalin!" "Three cheers for Stalin!" "Vive Staline!" "Es lebe Stalin!" "Eviva Staline!" "Stalin Banzai!" For fifteen minutes by my watch the crowd shouts and sings and whistles, each delegation in its tongue. Yet they have been here since five o'clock and earlier.

The chairman does not hasten them; he sings with them, leading them in the "Internationale." Even as we look on we realize that this is an event of world significance, this closing session of the Seventh Congress of the Comintern; we realize that never again shall we all meet together as we are met here now. Many of these laughing and singing young men and women from the scattered areas of the world will never see another such congress. Some of them will fall in the class struggle. Some will be arrested upon their return to their native lands and buried in fascist dungeons. They realize these facts as well as anybody. But tonight is theirs; tonight they sing and laugh and shout at the mention of the names of men whom the enemy has not been able to kill. The chairman, who might shorten the meeting because the hour is very late, joins them, helping to prolong it.

IT WAS five minutes before midnight when Thorez gave the floor to Dimitrov. It was five minutes before midnight when every person rose in the hall and began shouting above the music of the orchestra which had just entered the balcony opposite and taken a position directly over the platform. "Rot front!" the crowd cried in German. "Banzai!" the Japanese shouted. The American yelled "Hurrah!" while the band played and Dimitrov stood waiting behind the speakers stand, his manuscript spread before him. The spotlights glared upon his face while official cameras recorded pictures of him, of the Presidium and of the audience. Dimitrov stood waiting; unsmiling, at ease. He resembled some old-fashioned Shakespearian actors I have seen; I thought of William Farnum when he used to play the rugged and noble roles of upright men whose bodies and minds were strong. Dimitrov suggests such men: sturdy, well-built body, a broad face and high forehead. His heavy black eyebrows and thick black hair combed back heighten the impression of the romantic actor. But there is nothing in his manner suggestive of acting. He waits, looking over the delegates. He seems to be thinking that all this is part of the business of this Congress. Suddenly Henri Barbusse, at the long table above and behind Dimitrov leans over, looking at someone in the audience. Browder and Pieck look and Dimitrov turns from the stand before him toward a man who approaches with a great red-bound volume. Containing the whole history of Dimitrov's life to date, the book is a present from a group of workers. He accepts it amidst cheers.

All the while I can imagine those who are seeing him for the first time, as I am, saying to themselves: "So this is George Dimitrov!" Here is the man who so confounded the suave and dandified Goering at the Leipzig trial that Hitler's most powerful agent cried in frustration: "I'm not afraid of you!"—a confession not merely of fear but of terror. The crowd still shouts and sings and the band still plays. What must be the thoughts of Hitler and Goering when they read of this Congress and of Dimitrov's role in it? There is no doubt that they will do all they can to counteract his new influence upon German workers. The German press, I understand, has given this Congress columns of space. This same press will probably be ordered now to report Dimitrov's "arrest" or "suicide" or "assassination." Dimitrov runs his fingers through his hair and looks back at the chairman, smiling. The ovation subsides; the band ceases playing; the chairman smiles and nods.

Dimitrov begins. "The Seventh Congress of the Communist International, the Congress of Communists of all countries and all continents of the world, has come to an end." He goes on. This is a congress of complete triumph of the unity between the proletariat of victorious socialism—the Soviet Union—and the proletariat of the capitalist world fighting for their liberation. . . . He covers six main points characterizing this Congress, characterizations which show its unlikeness to other congresses of the Communist International. . . . This Congress laid the foundation for the broad mobilization of forces of the working class and of all toilers against capitalism such as had never before been known in the history of the struggle of the working class; this Congress was a congress of struggle against imperialist war; a congress of the unity of the working class—of struggle for the united proletarian front; it was a congress that expressed the feelings of the overwhelming majority of the working class, even though no non-Party delegates and no Social-Democratic workers were present. "This Congress," Dimitrov declares, "was a congress of new tactical orientation of the Comintern, an orientation which is based on the unshakable position of Marxism-Leninism and on this basis changes tactics in accordance with the changed world situation." . . . This Congress, however, was aware of the fact that there would be errors, individual deviations to the "right" or "left" in the carrying through in practice of a Bolshevik line; which of these dangers was in general the worse—this question was one simply of scholastics. "The danger is the worst which, in a given country and at a given moment, most hinders the carrying through the line of this Congress." . . . In the sixth place, Dimitrov says, this Congress was one of Bolshevik self-criticism and of strengthening the leadership of the Comintern and its sections.

Concluding, he calls upon the delegates to carry the decisions of this Congress to the wide masses of people, explaining and applying the decisions for leading the activities of millions of the masses. "We are pupils of Marx, Lenin and Stalin," he cries, his voice drowned in the ovation this declaration had evoked. "We must be worthy of our great teachers." He collects the pages of his manuscript and, making his way to the far end of the platform, mounts to the level where the Presidium sits. But the Presidium now rises, with everybody else in the great hall, singing the revolutionary songs of one country after another.

It is three quarters of an hour past midnight. Krupskaya and Ulyanova stand singing with the crowd. Thorez waits until the last song has been sung. He says: "I declare the Seventh Congress of the Comintern closed—" He waits for the cheering to subside. He proclaims: "Long live the Bolshevik Party and the leader of the international proletariat, Comrade Stalin—" He waits. "Long live the Communist International and its helmsman, Comrade Dimitrov!" The band swings into the "Internationale," thus turning the cheering into singing. The audience follows the band through every stanza to the very end, then stands waiting among the seats. Nobody moves to go out. The Presidium turns slowly and disperses into the room behind the red velvet hangings. The crowd dissolves into the corridors and into the streets. It is after one o'clock but Moscow is awake and merry. The Metropole Hotel across the broad square to the left is alive with light and music, for the tourists are having a good time. I start for my room but turn to look back at the building I have just left. A row of red flags illuminated by concealed lights flutter at their slender sticks. They look like jets of scarlet flame above the workers on the sidewalk.

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Correspondence

Prospects in the Soviet Union

To The New Masses:

The achievements of Soviet industry and agriculture for the first seven months of this year were published in Pravda on September 5. Altogether, the production compared to last year shows a 19.7 percent increase. The increase in the production of means of production increased 23.9 percent, in consumption goods 12.7. The productivity of labor increased remarkably, especially in heavy industry, 16 percent in seven months.

Loading of cars compared with the same period last year leaped 15.4 percent, that is, about 73,000 cars per day. There is now being conducted a mighty campaign for 80,000 car loadings per day. Altogether, transport under Kaganovich's vigorous leadership is rapidly moving to the forefront. Before long, the transport problem, it seems, will be solved. The number of workers in heavy industry has increased in comparison to the same period last year by 6.3 percent, in the railroad industry by nearly 13 percent. Wages in heavy industry and in the building trades have increased by 28 percent, and in other fields by a percentage somewhat lower. Together with this, it must be borne in mind that there has been a steady lowering of prices. By January 1, prices are expected to be lower by over 30 percent, increasing by that much the real wages throughout the Soviet Union. I mentioned last week the remarkable progress of Soviet agriculture: January 1, 1935, agriculture had a little over 278,000 tractors, about 4,500,000 horsepower. In July, 47,978 more tractors had been added with almost another million horsepower. This year, combines began to play an important role in Soviet agriculture.

Parallel with the tremendous economic growth is the cultural growth. Moscow is rapidly becoming the center of the art and scientific world. Right on the heels of the Physiological Congress which attracted so much attention in and outside the Soviet Union, we now have the first International Topological Conference and the Theater Festival in Moscow. I do not know enough mathematics to be able to judge the contribution of Soviet scholars to that science, though judging by statements of foreign mathematicians here, the contribution is considerable.

As regards the theater, however, there cannot be two opinions. The Soviet theater is vital, throbbing. It has all the characteristics of the Renaissance; it embraces the whole of dramatic culture; it attracts and develops talent to an incredible degree. So far, visitors have had an opportunity to see *Sadko* in the Bolshoi Theater, *King Lear* in the Jewish Theater, *Life on Wheels* in the Gypsy Theater, Pushkin's *Tale About the Fisherman and the Fish* in the Children's Theater and Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth from Mzensk,* known here *as Katerina Izmailova,* performed in the magnificent Workers' Club by the Second Moscow Art Theater. I am glad to report that from the reactions of all present, the same opera in New York was a travesty. And the criticisms of Olin Downs and others was nonsensical. To speak of the vulgarity of this beautiful opera is stupid. It is a masterpiece dramatically and highly gratifying musically.

Moscow. Jo.hua Kunitz.

Two Compliments

To The New Masses:

May I congratulate you and Charles Wedger for the great article on Mexico appearing in the issue of The New Masses I have just received

"Toward the Mexican Crisis" is magnificent even for us Mexicans who are in the place, and who, with a Marxist understanding, have the same standpoint of Charles Wedger.

In Mexico we have a great task unknown in other countries: to fight the demagogy of the government, which is very clearly stated in the article. Also, the author gives the proper importance to the National Committee of Proletarian Defense recently constituted.

Nicolas Pizarro-Suarez.

Mexico, D. F.

To The New Masses:

I saw and heard Barbusse many times during his brief visit to America in 1933. The inspiration of those days still burn like a torch in the night leading millions on the road to revolution.

I was deeply grateful for Joseph Freeman's tribute to Barbusse as it makes articulate for many thousands of intellectuals like myself, the love and admiration we have for a tried, a faithful worker of the Revolution.

Dorothy Dale.

New York City.

Professional Theatres

To The New Masses:

In September 3 issue of New Masses the author of an article stated that American revolutionary playwrights, unlike their European colleagues, refuse to "divide their time between the professional and the working-class theatres." This is an unintentional slur on the Theatre Union playwrights, myself among them. Since it exemplifies a type of thinking common among certain theatre comrades, I should like to have it cleared up.

The distinction between "professional" and "working-class theatres" is a false one. The Theatre Union, though professional, is a working-class organization. The playwrights on the Theatre Union board give it their *full time.* They do so *only because it is a working-class theatre.* The fact that it maintains professional standards and pays union wages in no wise excludes the Theatre Union from the category of working-class theatres, though I run into certain theatre comrades who profess to this "revolutionary line." It does throw additional burdens on the Theatre Union, requiring additional time; for running a professional workers theatre at prices low enough for workers (we are considering reducing our scale to $1 top this year) means endless labor and money-raising and organization. The writers on the board share this burden.

Nearly all Theatre Union writers have written for The New Theatre Magazine and for other theatre groups. But it should be remembered that their first and constant duty is to their own working-class organization, the Theatre Union. What would the editors of The New Masses say if another revolutionary journal would insist of them: "You write editorials and articles for us, since we are a working-class journal and you're a professional one." I think it is time for our theatre-working comrades to get over the idea that paying wages to an actor is counter-revolutionary; and time for them to start considering the Theatre Union as a working-class group with the same struggle every other group has for existence.

Paul Peters.

Letters in Brief

An "Observer" describes the sight of thousands of men, old and young, for the most part emaciated and sickly, standing in line before the W.P.A. offices all night. Many whom she first observed at 2 a.m. were still in line the next day at noon.

M. Pintzow writes that white-collar workers are enslaved, but many are not aware of their enslavement. Clerks work from 60 to 72 hours a week for wages ranging from $15 to $18. He adds, "It is about time they should awake from their lethargy and organize!"

The I.L.D. informs us that families of defendants on trial in Gallup, N. M., have had their food orders so severely limited in July that many are without food at the present time. In one case a family was without food for four days, while the smallest baby was severely ill. They were without wood or coal, their rents went unpaid. The Defense Committee immediately sent $10 and have demanded that relief authorities provide proper relief. Defense funds for those workers accused of killing a sheriff who was undeniably shot by his own deputies should be sent to the Gallup Defense Committee, Santa Fe, N. M.

That Robert Briffault's review of Will Durant's *The Story of Civilization* was "profoundly conceived and well-rounded" is the opinion of Benjamin Feinberg. He adds, the article "demonstrates the pinnacle of perfection in the field of book review and comment."

A letter from Oakland, Calif., informs us that under the guise of preparing for earthquakes and natural disasters, a disaster ordinance has been proposed in San Francisco which would prove a powerful weapon in the fight against organized labor. The ordinance creates a separate police power that would act as a scab agency in time of strike.

A reader protests against a Paramount Newsreel which attempted to "prove" that strikes and social discontent throughout the United States are the result of agitation on the part of a few Reds. The reel ended with a eulogy of the Navy in its recent maneuver for the benefit of school children.

Kwan Eguti of Tokio, Japan, writes that Japanese cultural organizations are becoming active again after the repression that began with the invasion of Manchuria. He predicts a new wave of working-class literature.

Alvin Johnson, Tulane University student, and George Skakel, seaman, were kidnaped and later charged with violation of a non-existent city ordinance for picketing a New Orleans theatre, the American League Against War and Fascism writes. They were protesting the showing of *Stranded,* an anti-working-class picture.

Richard Babb Whitton of New Orleans will succeed Lucien Koch as director of Commonwealth College, the labor school near Mena, Ark., the college informs us. Whitton was former national chairman of the Student League for Industrial Democracy.

A Garcia Diaz sees the notes protesting the meeting of Communist International sent by the United States to the Soviet government as dangerous to world peace. He points out that no protest is made to the very obvious foreign meddling engaged in by the imperialist powers — such as Montagu Norman's secret visits to America and the "very real foreign influences that work havoc with the destiny of this country . . . those [influences] well intrenched in the seats of high finance and banking."

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REVIEW AND COMMENT

Another View of Briffault

WHEN Granville Hicks in his review of Robert Briffault's *Europa* refers to my recent remarks upon the novel, I have the normal reaction of a pleased author, but I am not prepared to accept Hicks' conclusions on Briffault's novel. When I wrote that the boundaries of the novel should be extended to take in anything an author might care to say, I certainly had no intention of meaning *everything* an author had to say. This might very well be possible with many novelists but in the case of Briffault it is manifestly an absurdity. My own opinion of Briffault is large. I not only consider him the most brilliant writer in the English language today but by long odds the most learned and profound man of our time. His background of learning is so large and his understanding of all forms of culture and practically all forms of science is so great that for Briffault to put all of himself into a novel would be a work of decades, running into dozens of volumes. It would be more than a novel; it would be a compendium of human knowledge.

Hicks thinks that the material of *Europa* might better have appeared in another form. What other form? As an autobiography? As a Mark Sullivan rehash of the social doings of pre-war Europe? And why another form? I consider the novel an excellent form when it is used as Briffault has used it. He has reconstructed the entire pre-war history through the medium of fictional characters. I consider it a smashing success as a novel. It has everything—love, scandal, ideas, philosophies, the burgeonings of the new science and an almost miraculous recapturing of the mind and inner feelings of the young man, Julian Bern, who is traveling through those times. I've read it twice and I can't remember a false note in the important matter of Julian Bern's setting against his background. It is not Bern looking back at his past, but Bern living steadily in the immediate present. And his mind moves with that present; the mind of Bern in his later days in Germany is not the mind of Bern as a youth in Rome. It is not the mind of the Cambridge undergraduate. The other characters move in the same way. Without using the obvious tags of current songs and current books to show the passage of time, Briffault shows in an amazing fashion the progress not only of Bern but of Europe. To me, it is a superb job of novel writing.

When I mention the jacket material, I have reference to the possibility that Briffault might better have written the book as an autobiography. There was never any chance of this. Briffault was the son of a diplomatist and enjoyed the culture of Europe at a time when the ordinary English boy was concerned solely with vespers and cricket, but the people of the book were never his intimate friends. He had the knowledge of them which might have come to any alert young man who followed the insane gyrations of the rich and the noble and it is a testimonial to his stature as a novelist that he has been able to deal with them with such authority—such authority, indeed, that most critics have taken for granted that *Europa* is only thinly veiled autobiography.

The striking thing, of course, is that both Hicks and I are able to use *Europa* as a complete case to prove our point. What sets Hicks astray, I believe, is his feeling (or his understanding of my words) that the novel calls for a new form which will permit the full utilization of *all* an author's resources. (My italics now, but not when I wrote my original article.) What leads him farther astray, I think, is his preoccupation with Proust. There is no better guide and I am at one with Hicks in his admiration for the great Frenchman, but it makes it difficult for anybody who follows. It reminds me as well that another friend of mine has been disappointed in *Europa* because it was not another *Magic Mountain*. For my part, I am always hoping that somebody is going to be another Tolstoy. But until somebody better comes along, I'm going to be content with Briffault. I think he's great stuff and that *Europa* is one of the great novels of our time.

Perhaps it would be well for me to point out that my remarks about the novel were not occasioned by *Europa*.. I had read the book in proofs before writing the article but it never occurred to me that I might be building a theory around a concrete example. But when Hicks points out that Briffault has not accepted my advice on the subject, I am struck with the fact that he had done that very thing. That he accepted it several years before I gave it is beside the point. He has done what I hope other novelists will do: He has used the novel as an all-inclusive form through which a first-class intelligence may function. Not, heaven forbid, with a view to parading *all* his intelligence but with a determination to stop and say things that need saying if the mood strikes him.

On the practical side, which, I admit, has nothing to do with the case, the possibilities are almost certain that Briffault will do in America what Proust has never been able to do. Because *Europa* is so alive with incident and vigor, the book seems headed for a wide sale. It is hardly likely that even the stupidest reader will miss the revolutionary implications of Briffault's book. They may be titillated by its frankness and enthralled by its parade of noble ladies and gentlemen but there will be no chance for them to overlook the plain meaning of the picture of decay. This is a civilization coasting to its doom, not depressed by the nearness of the end, not worried by the storm clouds above, not heeding the rumbles from below. Just as in the New York of 1931, there were prophets of joy to point out that the depression was undoubtedly over because of the huge crowds at the night clubs, so the money wasters of Europe before 1914 lived at a

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delirious pace which to the casual onlooker seemed the complete indication that everything was right in the world. The febrile and strident quality of this suicidal excitement was missed by all but the thinkers, the Marxists, who knew its false foundations. Briffault has pictured this life with the utmost brilliance. Because it had its base so firmly grounded in eroticism—partly as a revulsion from the Victorian morality of the preceding era and partly because every age of decay is also an age of sexual license and perversion, Briffault has covered that aspect with entire frankness. A book of the scope of *Europa* without that emphasis would be no more a true picture of pre-war Europe than Henry Seidel Canby's nostalgia for Wilmington, Delaware, in the 90's is a true picture of American small-town life of the period. When, therefore, Hicks says that "one of Proust's briefest scenes makes us more conscious of the manifestations of social rottenness than the whole of Briffault's novel," I can only reply that he is not only speaking for himself alone in saying it but that I very much fear he is talking through his hat.

The simplest answer to his further charge that in *Europa* "the Italian, Russian, French, German and British nobles seem curiously alike," is that they *were* curiously alike. How could they be anything but alike when they traveled about in small exclusive droves from one fashionable resort to the other as the true pre-war international, the international of nobility and fantastic wealth. Just as there is very little in common between an Arthur Balfour and a coal miner from Glasgow, there is everything in common between a Prince Troubetskoy and a Duke of Gloucester. This was even more true in the Golden Age of the Riviera when the same noble people saw the same noble people day after day, party after party, night after night. If left unmolested for several more generations, it would possibly have been difficult to tell the men from the women.

I have left to the last Hicks' assertion that *Europa* is "a piece of immensely clever reporting" rather than the work of a poetic novelist. If I were Mr. Briffault I think I should ask Hicks to smile when he said that but it really makes little difference. Journalistic or poetic—what matter? Is it a great novel? I say it is. Hicks says it is not. What he is really saying is that he wishes Briffault had written another sort of book. He intimates that in other fields Briffault is incomparable. I agree with him and add that *Europa* is incomparable. This seems to cover it.

ROBERT FORSYTHE.

A Source Book on Corruption

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS, by George Seldes. New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company. $2.75.

FOR years this book has been needed. Upton Sinclair plowed the field with *The Brass Check,* Silas Bent sowed a little seed with *Ballyhoo,* and additional planting has been done regularly by the liberal weeklies and the radical press. Mr. Seldes has harvested the entire crop. His book is a storehouse of information on the primary corruptions of the daily newspapers. The title, of course, is ironical, since Mr. Seldes proves that there is no real freedom of the press—except the freedom to suppress, distort and poison the news.

The strength of the book is quantitative. Most of the author's evidence is familiar to newspapermen. Year by year, incident by incident, nearly all reporters and editors have witnessed or made sacrifices of the reader for a capitalistic holiday. In justice to the editorial workers it must be noted that their souls have often revolted against their jobs; but even a soul can get tired and dull. As for the readers, the better informed also know that newspapers aren't what the circus-barker slogans of the mastheads say they are. Even in Los Angeles, there must be people who smile at the words carved in the red-brown granite entrance of The Times' new $4,000,000 plant: "Truth" and "Equal Rights." And it is pretty well known that if the son of a big department-store owner gets a village maiden with child, the publisher's conscience will snap out of the customary coma long enough to kill the story, lest proletarian morals become impaired by news of such goings-on.

But neither the newspaper worker nor the reader has hitherto had the opportunity to examine such a mass of evidence as Mr. Seldes has gathered for his handbook of newspaper perfidy. All of the old scandals are included and many new ones; plus odd lots of material from the experience of the author and other newspapermen who gladly told stories that their own newspapers would never print. The book covers the period from the proprietary medicine scandal of a generation ago to the present. It shows the dishonorable relation of the newspapers to public utilities, Teapot Dome, pure-food and drug control, propaganda, both domestic and international; advertising, war, fascism, labor and the Soviet Union, to give a fair sampling. The anti-labor bias of the Associated Press is well substantiated in a special chapter, which also recites how that agency cooperated with an internationally-minded group (including our very own State Department) engaged in promoting a war with Mexico by the old Red-scare trick.

The bill of particulars drawn up by Mr. Seldes naturally prompts two questions: Why do newspapers conceal the truth and print lies? and, What is the remedy? There can be no quarrel with the answer that Mr. Seldes makes to the first question. He avoids the common explanation of blaming everything on the advertisers, although he does give them their due. The genesis of newspaper corruption is best illustrated by this paragraph from a chapter on The New York Times:

> The Times in America is the organ of the men of the *status quo,* the friend of those in power, the conservative spokesman of a system which dreads change and which fears every reform and radical plan because every change is an attack on the established profit-making order. Friends of the Times declare that the corrupting influence of big business is never felt in the Times office. It is never felt because the Times is a part of the big business system itself.

What is true of The Times is also true to a greater or less degree of all other capitalist newspapers. Because the bank balance of every publisher depends upon the life of capitalism, newspaper owners caress the hand that feeds them. Their national organization, the American Newspaper Publishers' Association, copies the tactics of the National Association of Manufacturers and the Iron and Steel Institute—or, more likely, provides inspiration for these less-favored factory folk. Certainly it was not the steel industry that recently proved that child labor is the sacred birthright of Americans, nor was it the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce that crushed the general strike by bamboozling a million people. Also to the honor of the publishers, it must be said that they do not solve their private labor problems by hiring scabs and thugs from Mr. Bergoff. They run their own agency and run it so well that several hundred strikebreakers can be sent to any part of the country on short notice, according to the anuual report that Mr. Seldes quotes.

To expect fair treatment of labor from a capitalistic press is such an elementary absurdity that discussion may seem unnecessary. Nevertheless many intelligent readers see nothing inconsistent in The New York Post's pro-labor editorials and its avowed support of Roosevelt; and occasionally we find someone who thinks that The New York World-Telegram or The San Francisco News is the workingman's friend. Even The New York Herald Tribune has its quota of overalled defenders. This paper does so much publicized good with its fresh-air fund for children that it would be unkind to notice that the publisher has welshed on his former support of the child-labor amendment. Surely Mr. Seldes, after showing why the newspapers are the willing implements of capitalistic exploiters, war-breeders, Red-baiters and fascist promoters, might be expected to conclude that a capitalistic press can not be free.

But he doesn't. To the question, "What is the remedy?", he gives a perhaps-and-however answer. He looks hopefully to the American Newspaper Guild which he calls the "most important" development in "the struggle for a free press in our country." (Here the reader may interpolate, "Just who has been struggling for a free press?") Mr.

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Seldes confirms the worst fears of the publishers by saying, "What the Guild really wants is a say in newspaper making in America. It is entitled to that. The day of the irresponsible employer is over and the employer who does not recognize this fact is inviting revolution."

If Mr. Seldes really believes that the publishers will forestall revolution by yielding part of their power to organized newspapermen, he is dead wrong. That, to the publishers, would be revolution; and they have said so. Many have complained bitterly that a Guild member cannot write the impartial brand of labor news which glorifies strikebreakers for loyalty and National Guard machine-gunners for heroism. In fairness to the publishers, the complaint is sound. The reporter who has carried a sign no longer thinks that picketing is whimsical or ungentlemanly. But honest newspapermen, even when organized, aren't enough. They can't compel publication of their stories as written and neither can they rearrange the sources of the publishers' income.

Thus Mr. Seldes, after an excellent presentation of the case against the capitalistic press, hesitates to record the proper verdict. Plainly he is not yet prepared to advocate a workers' press as the substitute. He does say that if the Guild fails to win newspaper freedom, we must turn "toward changing the order under which we live today." Mr. Seldes is sincere, but his statement should be weighed with other "if" warnings. For example, it was Daniel Willard, whose duties with the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad prevent him from taking an active part in the radical movement, who said that if his family were starving, he would not hesitate to steal. Last reports were that the Willards still had something in the icebox and the Baltimore courts were busy with other cases.

Incidentally, the portions of the book dealing with the Soviet Union show exceptional fair-mindedness, especially when it is remembered that Mr. Seldes left his post as Moscow correspondent some years ago at the request of the government. He distinguishes, for example, between the government-controlled Soviet press, with the welfare of the workers its immediate aim and complete freedom its ultimate goal and the captive press of Germany and Italy. Our American publishers frequently point to press restrictions in the Soviet Union as proof of the great blessings enjoyed by readers in this country.

To some extent, the book is out of balance because Mr. Seldes is primarily a truth-hunter and chronicler rather than an appraiser. An entire chapter, albeit a short one, is allotted to the sins of The Paris Herald and the defunct Paris Tribune, probably because the writer had plenty of dirt on hand. Yet three more important subjects—the smashing of the San Francisco strike, the publishers' operation of a strikebreaking agency and their fight against the child labor amendment—get only one chapter combined. It may be doubted, too, whether the newspaper roll of honor, occupying fifteen pages, can be justified. Certainly most of the individual newspapermen and newspaperwomen deserve the kind words given them, but a majority of the newspapers cited smell bad despite the perfume of a good deed or two.

But these are minor objections. The important thing is that Mr. Seldes has told enough to convince any intelligent person that newspapers habitually betray working-class readers on a grand scale. The book should be widely read.

ALEXANDER L. CROSBY.

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"In the Genteel Tradition"

VEIN OF IRON, by Ellen Glasgow. Harcourt, Brace. $2.50.

MISS GLASGOW'S list of published books has now reached the very impressive total of twenty, most of which are novels, all of them distinguished by meticulous craftsmanship and a fine feminine feeling for the more delicate shades of mood, the subtler aspects of character and all that in nature is most pleasing to the senses. With each succeeding novel she has further perfected her enviably sure, deft touch, until today it is indeed a rare reader who will not surrender, momentarily at least, to the pervasive compound of lovely color, the scent of flowers, refined yet rich emotion, nostalgia and Virginian idealism that is the peculiar distinction of her work. Not without cause has her position in the world of conventional belles lettres become increasingly eminent and secure. If not America's first woman novelist, she is certainly, in the opinion of most reputable critics, of the company of such "immortals" as Willa Cather and Edith Wharton.

There are a few readers, however, who have always been impervious to her charms. Since I am one of them I will admit that I have never before been able to offer really cogent reasons to support my rather ungracious stubbornness. I felt only a vague uneasiness about the truth and importance of her pictures of life among the decaying aristocrats of her beloved Tidewater region. It seemed to me that they were embellished pictures, pictures distorted by too much sympathy, too much compassion to allow a realistic understanding of what lay beneath the decay and what the value was (to "civilization") of the grace and ritual and "culture" of these Southern ladies and gentlemen. I have been told that her pictures are true—factually as well as artistically—and that no one has ever so profoundly searched into the souls of these people as she has. Since I have never been south of Washington I have been willing, though a little reluctantly, to grant her the truth, but I have not been willing to grant her the value. Her work seemed to me to relate not at all to anything that I or any of my friends can consider significant or moving or even simply interesting in this country today.

I am pleased to be able to report that I can now sustain my point of view with somewhat more rational arguments. I have discovered that when the eminent Miss Glasgow comes down to the earth that most of us recognize, she is a great deal less than omniscient. In fact, I am tempted to go so far as to say that she really doesn't know what she's talking about. I discover, too, that she is not especially gifted with imagination and her beautiful poetic style fails to overwhelm me. She should never have written this novel. She should have confined herself to that rarefied sphere of existence inhabited by those whose blood is no paler blue than aquamarine or ice.

Vein of Iron is the story of several generations of Fincastles—a family descended from pioneers, Calvinist clergymen and Indian-fighters, who live in a valley in Virginia's mountain land. Around them are forests and old farms and tiny villages and beyond, the Blue Ridge and the Appalachians. Living now are these of the Fincastles: the inevitable Grandmother, a true descendant of pioneer stock, doughty, valiant, iron-willed; her son, a defrocked minister, agnostic, philosopher, dreamer; his wife, a daughter of the Tidewater nabobs, fragile, sweet, happy in spite of privation and pain; their daughter, a piece of the Grandmother, proud, indomitable, "single-hearted." I hope that I have been able to convey, in spite of absolute fidelity to Miss Glasgow's portraits, the triteness of these stock characters. I am tired of lusty grandmothers and incredulous of unworldly dreamers in the wilderness of Virginia who write five-volume works of metaphysics capable of being appreciated only by half a dozen scholars in Europe.

At any rate, the story is concerned chiefly with the love and marriage of the daughter, Ada. She grew up with and adored a youth named Ralph McBride, whose Irish paternity was doubtless responsible for "his charm and his amused, friendly manner," "his auburn head," and "his sudden smile that had a power over her heart." Unfortunately, just as they were about to become engaged, he was trapped into a marriage with a silly, spoiled, beautiful, but cunning young lady whose father was apparently the richest man in town. Ada despaired, yet the "vein of iron" in her—that singular heritage from the Fincastles of the frontier—enabled her to go on living and even to find some happiness. Eventually, Ralph divorces his wife, has a

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brief affair with Ada (of course, she becomes pregnant), and goes off to war. Of course, they marry when he returns, but, of course, he has returned from France embittered and grey. It would have helped a great deal at this point if Miss Glasgow had indicated that McBride's bitterness grew out of wisdom—out of a realization of the injustices that made possible the horrors of war. There is no such indication. There is no indication at all of the cause of his bitterness. He is just bitter.

They move to the city (Richmond?) where for a few years they prosper. The stock market crash in 1929 does not touch them, but the depression does. McBride's illness despoils them of their savings, ultimately he loses his job and then, together with their child and Ada's incredible father, they suffer poverty, humiliation and that miserable fear of tomorrow that only the proletarian can ever know. In the end, the father leaves them unobtrusively and goes back to their old mountain home to die. Ada and Ralph follow him and when they arrive they know that to settle once more on the land of her ancestors is their destiny and that they will find peace and contentment there without riches.

The story is obviously false from beginning to end. Its falseness is literary—a sequence of events which arise not out of the author's personal experience or knowledge, but out of a limited imagination engaged in creating a narrative concerning a way of life about which the author is ignorant. It results from accepting a poorly understood subject: the events conform to a pattern, each element of which may be convincing, but the composite romantic and even lurid. No situation seems wholly natural. Its logic is not that of reality but of literature and the reader is reminded at a hundred points of other novels, other stories, other scenes. It is not only the characters(all of whom are traditional types) that give this impression, but the actual incidents irrespective of the parts played in them by the personages of the story. The constancy of the childhood lover, the reversion to the pioneering strain, the pregnancy, the wartime disillusionment of Ralph, the cheerful patience of the self-sacrificing Ada, the finding of themselves in poverty, the return to the land of the forefathers—nothing is without a literary precedent, everything conditioned by the needs of romance instead of the demands of life.

Nor is that all that lends falseness to Miss Glasgow's novel. To a writer of her stature and her manifest gifts, one must concede without question that she has felt deeply the fate and suffering of her characters. But she has felt them remotely—in a realm of imagination that on the one hand has no contact with fact and on the other has not attained the level of genius. For example, the most poignant section of the book is that which deals with poverty, breadlines, illness and the grief of social rootlessness. With what timidity Miss Glasgow enters that fearful world of the poor. With what gentility she pictures the hungry and the desolate! How clean the air is, how pure the spirit, how pathetic! How unconvincing! Miss Glasgow is lost, just as she was lost when she touched on the war. She cannot write of things she does not know. When she does, even her style suffers. Its richness becomes then something very close to lushness.

But in justice to Miss Glasgow, I must add that that style, with its embroidery of wit and physical sensitiveness, makes her novel readable enough so that one may go through it without realizing that she has done a courageous thing in writing it at all. It is no light matter for a novelist as old as Miss Glasgow to adventure in foreign lands and with foreign themes. She has failed utterly, but let us respect her attempt. We know her now as a writer of definitely bounded talents, but at least we know her as a person of feeling and sincerity.

BERNARD SMITH.

No Crime and Plenty Punishment

PRISONER OF THE OGPU, by George Kitchin. New York: Longmans, Green & Co. $3.

BETWEEN the time this "true-story narrative" was written and the time it was published its author very obligingly died. I say obligingly only because that would seem to be the attitude of Mr. Kitchin's publishers, inasmuch as they do not hesitate to try to make capital out of their client's demise. In a box sententiously funereal, preceding the body of the narrative they state: "As this book was being prepared for the press, news was received of the death in London of George Kitchin from pneumonia following complications which resulted from his privations in Russian penal camps." Can any one doubt that the narrative which follows must be 100-percent true, since its veracity is vouched for by a bona-fide corpse?

What are the facts? By the author's own admission, thanks to his "guardian angel," much of the time during his four years stay in the Northern Penal Colonies was spent in "soft" office jobs. In this capacity he even was promoted to the rank of a functionary, lived in the town in comparative freedom, was sent on an investigating committee, received a salary, etc. Again, by the author's own admission, although he insinuates and in fact says—untruthfully—in so many words that political prisoners were almost never released at the end of their terms, but instead were given new and more severe terms of servitude, he was released on the dot and permitted to depart for his beloved white Finland. Following his release, according to information given to us in the preface, Mr. Kitchin spent a year and a half in Italy "convalescing" and, having convalesced sufficiently, still another year in writing the present book. To attribute his death in London by pneumonia, two and a half years after his release, to the machinations of the O.G.P.U., may be good anti-Soviet propaganda, but it seems to us to be poor medicine.

What manner of man was the late Mr. Kitchin? A citizen of Finland, he was "lured to Russia by the promises of the N.E.P. (New Economic Policy) proclaimed by Lenin in 1921 . . . I had started out as the representative of a Finnish group seeking a concession in Russia and within a year developed an import business on a large scale . . . I had also established a plant for the manufacture of oil and candles for churches. There were sixty thousand churches in Russia at the time and I enjoyed a virtual monopoly of the business." In other words, Mr. Kitchin was a typical representative of the capitalist riff-raff who were so sure that, given enough rope, the Bolsheviks would hang themselves and Russia would become at last an open hunting ground for concessionaires, thieves, entrepreneurs, white guards, pimps, whores, murderers and other such ladies and gentlemen of the old school.

Like his wife Luba, who was twice arrested by the O.G.P.U. on suspicions of espionage, Mr. Kitchin had a buddy in the personage of "a British consul in Leningrad, Mr. Preston, who occasionally entertained both foreigners and Russians at tea. Mr. Preston was a thorn in the flesh of the Soviet officials. He wore a monocle in the land of the Soviets, donned a silk hat when driving out on official visits and his English manner irritated the comrades exceedingly. Moreover, he consistently ignored the local representatives of the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs (purely for social reasons, of course)

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whenever he sent out invitations to a reception."

This Mr. Preston is the same gentleman whose name appeared in the reports of the trial of the Intelligence Service agents of the Metropolitan Vickers Corporation in Moscow, 1933.

Mr. Kitchin would have us believe that nothing more intriguing than tea was dished up at Mr. Preston's afternoons at home. The O.G.P.U. twice arrested Luba, a Russian citizen, on the suspicion of drinking tea. And the real reason they persecuted her was because she wouldn't become an O.G.P.U. spy.

Curiously enough, this was the only cause for complaint they had against Mr. Kitchin himself. The O.G.P.U. wanted to get something on the Finnish Consulate General and they were simply furious when Mr. Kitchin refused to help them. "Why did they arrest me? It was useless to ask the reason. I had simply fallen into the second category of Soviet citizens. According to a popular saying in Russia, the population of the U. S. S. R. is divided into three categories, those who have been in prison, those who are in prison and those who will be in prison."

I suspect that the Russia of Mr. Kitchin's popular sayings was not much more extensive than Mr. Preston's parlor or the back office of the Finnish consulate. However, that is not the point. The point is that our hero was guiltless as a new-born babe and was therefore sentenced to serve four years in the Northern Penal Camps. As Kitchin says: "Could you trust any Soviet prosecutor?"

The preface to the present book written by one Jerome Landfield, sets the tone of the narrative which is "offered to the public . . . as a contribution to the understanding of conditions in the Soviet Utopia." It is precisely this sneer for the "Soviet Utopia" that emerges from almost every page of Mr. Kitchin's "objective-without-rancor" account of his experiences. To quote a few samples at random: "He seemed to take better care of his outward appearance than you would expect from a regular party Communist." "It meant an interruption of work in the Five-Year-Plan program, throwing a monkey-wrench into the machine of Socialist construction. Outrageous and quite impossible!" "I frequently had an opportunity to see men, who considered themselves the cream of Soviet officialdom, at work. A lot of noise, shouting, peremptory commands, idiotic orders impossible to execute, innumerable long, complicated and contradictory telegrams, infuriated telephone conversations full of intimidation, useless summoning of department heads for personal interviews which only interrupted their fruitful work, constant travelling, artificial feverish activity—such were uniformly the working habits of the high officials with whom I came in contact." (Hence, no doubt, the completion of the First Five Year Plan in four years.) For Communists, "the herd of humanity is but the manure for fertilizing the fields of Socialism." "At least three-quarters of the total population of the U.S.S.R. is against the Soviet Government." When Moscow ordered an investigation of conditions in the penal colonies, this was merely a gesture to satisfy a "few finicky Communists." When, as a result of investigations and purges, conditions were bettered, this was merely to pull the wool over the eyes of foreign reporters. (Like the Moscow subway which, as Ilya Ehrenbourg satirically suggested, was put down over night to impress the French visitors and was promptly torn up again the next day following their departure.)

The best jails in the world are only prisons and the Northern Penal Colonies were certainly no fragments of utopia, Soviet or otherwise. Nobody claims they were. There were undoubtedly abuses. There were undoubtedly elements that took advantage of their position and worked in ways contrary to the aims of the Soviet Government. Does not Mr. Kitchin himself tell us what happened when these abuses became known in Moscow? On one page he insists that the investigations which followed were a hollow mockery, but on the next he admits that a number of officials were bagged in the clean-up and shot for abuse of office. Mr. Kitchin's tale of horrors, his total omission of a single item in favor of the Soviets, his insistence that all the anti-Soviet politicals, wreckers and kulaks in the penal camps were innocent, gentle and wise, while all the O.G.P.U. officials were sub-human, sadistic morons may carry the ring of truth to such experts on the U.S.S.R. as J. Donald Adams of The Times book review section and the Rev. John Haynes Holmes. But to the layman it will appear obvious that our hero protests too much.

A word finally about Mr. Landfield's preface to this book. "The present author," he writes of our hero, "is the only man, as far as I am aware, who has undergone the actual experiences of these penal camps and lived to tell the tale." Is Mr. Landfield kidding us? If he will trouble to read the stirring reports of the building of the Baltic-White Sea Canal—to mention only one enterprise among many conducted by the O.G.P.U.—in the process of which many criminals found a new road to life, he will find plenty more men—and women—who lived to tell the tale. It is true that not all these men and women were—like Mr. Kitchin—of "social standing and business reputation above reproach." But maybe that is why the stories they have to tell are so different, so much more honest, so vastly more impressive than *Prisoner of the OGPU*.

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Not only these, but every other American who thought with Barbusse will want to read his last and greatest work, "Stalin," which will be published October 11th, probable price $3.50. An intimate friend of Stalin's, Barbusse undoubtedly was the best equipped man in the world to present, as he has done, the case for Bolshevism: the account, in fact, of a New World as seen through one man.

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Peddling Will Rogers' Body

ED RAY

HOLLYWOOD.

AS IS customary in this village where capitalism is using the third largest industry to perpetuate the status quo, the flash that Will Rogers was dead was the signal for the Greatest Show on Earth. Everything that has been done to put over the Gables and the Garbos faded into insignificance, alongside the energy and effort spent in starring Will Rogers' dead body.

The first important step was made when the widow was hustled into turning all arrangements over to the energetic Mr. Lawler, vice-president of Hearst's Examiner. Lawler proceeded to show the boys how they could not only do honor to the departed but turn it into a huge profit-making enterprise on the side. The boys got together. The Hearst press was loaded to the guards with news of the plans for the disposal of the remains. Extras flashed out every few minutes. The Chamber of Commerce was contacted by Mr. Lawler. Yes! It might be a good thing for the Chamber if the Hollywood Bowl were turned over to Lawler and his cohorts for a gigantic overflow service. The main show was at the Forrest Lawn Cemetery.

But, running true to form, Hollywood overdid it all. They insisted upon a "double feature." They announced that for five hours beginning at 7 a.m. curiosity-seekers and friends of the departed could pass by their bier at the cemetery. What the friends and thrill-seekers didn't find out, however, until after they had gathered, some 100,000 strong, was that contrary to their expectations, the body was not on display. They simply had the privilege of passing a covered coffin.

Timed with this event, notices went up in each studio to the effect that "Not a wheel will turn, not a camera will crank during the hour from 2 p.m. till 3 p.m., during the services." This announcement in the papers was warmly received by the public at large, who thought, "Well—the studios have a soul after all." But what the public didn't know were these two important facts. All the actors were called, in make-up, at 6 a.m. instead of 8 a.m., to make up for the hour lost later in the day. Besides, all the extra cameras had to be put into use to photograph the various services held in each studio, without exception. At each of these a rabbi, a minister and a priest officiated. The gates were locked at two sharp and attendance was compulsory. Some of the overheated actors tried to stand in the shade, but this couldn't be done— the light was bad—and they had to stand in the sun while the cameras ground out a clip in each studio—to be assembled later in a mighty fine example of newsreelism—an expensive clip, too.

For those on location, the notice read, "You will stop work sharply at two and spend the hour in reflection." I noticed one chap in the extra ranks who seemed more reflective than the rest, and asked him if he knew the departed. "No," he answered, "I'm just reflecting over the fact that we were awful chumps the other day to allow M. G. M. to do that to us." "Do what?" "Well," he explained, burning, "They gave us extras a call—1800 of us—we came to the studio, made up, reported. They tried to figure a couple set-ups, decided against it and excused us all. We were supposed to get $3.20 for the day—but they handed us each a quarter check—a lousy eighty cents apiece—and thirty of it went for carfare. A swell day to try to reflect, ain't it?"

On the same day Marion Davies published an open statement to the Hearst Enterprises suggesting that a huge memorial be started in memory of Bill. A significant line in this letter was "Put me down for whatever YOU think I should give to start it." This became very confusing when The Times and others started their own individual drives to give John Public the terrific opportunity of donating toward a memorial to Rogers.

Everyone started to outdo the other. A member of the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce, stuck with a parcel of land too small for a gas station or place of business, located at the intersection of Hollywood Boulevard and La Brea, magnanimously suggested that his white elephant be considered as an ideal location for a statue of Will Rogers looking down Hollywood Boulevard.

Another group suggested that the public be invited to help purchase the immense Rogers Ranch in Santa Monica. A Beverly Hills committee is starting a campaign to raise a million for a suitable memorial. At

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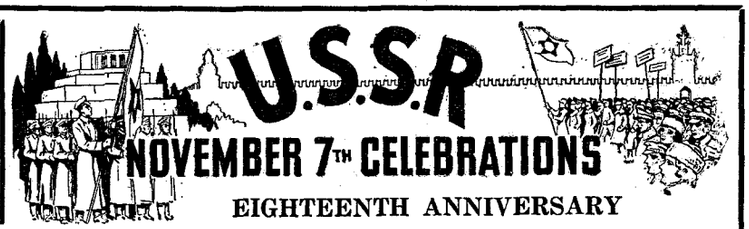

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Santa Barbara the city is going to have a chance to get in on a proposed $100,000 Will Rogers Bowl. Meanwhile, there are so many other various and sundry "public-spirited" individuals, all intent on raising their own little $100,000 and $50,000 memorials (funds to be raised by popular subscription) that they will find it necessary, as with the bootleggers, to wear badges to keep from asking one another for "memorial" money.

My guess is that The Examiner-Lawler-Warner Bros.-Marion Davies combination will win out, as their publicity campaign is overwhelming. Statements praising the Marion Davies Memorial are being yanked from actors. As one big-shot actor told me, when I read his endorsement of the plan, "I'd rather be an active Davies booster than an unemployed actor." I have tried to compute the amount of space devoted by Hearst's Examiner and Herald-Express to Marion's Memorial, but have failed. Suffice to say it is much more than was devoted to the story of the two "alleged Reds" who were dragged from their homes in Santa Rosa, Calif., tarred, feathered and beaten by the vigilantes.

And if the newspaper space is that tough to compute, one can imagine the futile job of attempting to find out exactly how much memorial money will be actually garnered by playing upon our gullible, and the actual disposal of the same. The "Sentimental Studio," striking while the iron is hot, spotted half-page ads in the Hearst Papers, with a picture of the late Rogers, headed by the following: "America's Eternal Favorite—star—humorist—MAN. T West Coast Fox Theatres falls the privilege of presenting his NEWEST un-released picture," even though Shirley Temple's picture has to be yanked ahead of time to get in with it quick.

Charles Driscoll, McNaughton syndicate head, has been approaching writers and comics with a view to replacing Rogers' spot and the nearest to a selection is Fred Allen, who, if he weren't "under wraps," or as he calls it "slugged with the Golden Blackjack," could do some good for the socially-conscious. Inasmuch as he can't take it, how about this for a suggestion: Recommend Robert Forsythe for the job—and then run. Maybe he could at least find a variation of the Hearst-Davies - Lawler - Chamber of Commerce method of raising Memorial Money. In the scramble for this, Will is beginning to assume the obscurity of Wiley Post (who at least proved something) in the ever-increasing cry of "How much will you give to the Marion Davies Memorial?" Mind you—not the Will Rogers Memorial!

Young, bewildered Will Rogers, Jr. said, "No member of the family has been approached about the several Memorial Plans," and then probably thinking of Oscar Lawler, vice-president of The Examiner, and now attorney for the Rogers family, summing up the whole publicity-drenched affair, chose a line made famous by his father, in commenting on the entire scheme! "All I know about it is what I read in the newspapers!"

Between Ourselves

ERNEST HEMINGWAY has been living in Florida for some years. Our request for a story of the veterans in the hurricane found him just returned from a first-hand inspection of the death-trap camps on Matecumbe Key, before the bodies had been cleared away.

Arthur Kallet has been working immensely long days with the Consumers' Research strikers since the walkout began in Washington, N. J., but he managed to crowd in the extra task of writing his article for us. He will report further developments in the situation.

An article by Loren Miller, "Last in Peace, Last in War," deals with the treatment of Negroes in the United States armed forces throughout our history, with particular emphasis on the World War. Miller will preside at a meeting Friday night, Sept. 13, at Irving Plaza, 15th Street and Irving Place, at which Earl Browder's *Communism in the U. S. A.* will be reviewed. Clarence Hathaway, editor of The Daily Worker, and John Howard Lawson will speak. The Marine Workers Committee, a group of workers and professionals who help the rank-and-file seamen and longshoremen in their struggles on the waterfront, is holding the meeting.

Eugene Gordon was a Boston newspaperman and an associate editor of THE NEW MASSES until he went to the Soviet Union last Spring.

Joseph Freeman is finishing his forthcoming book, *An American Testament,* announced for publication in December by Farrar & Rinehart.

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